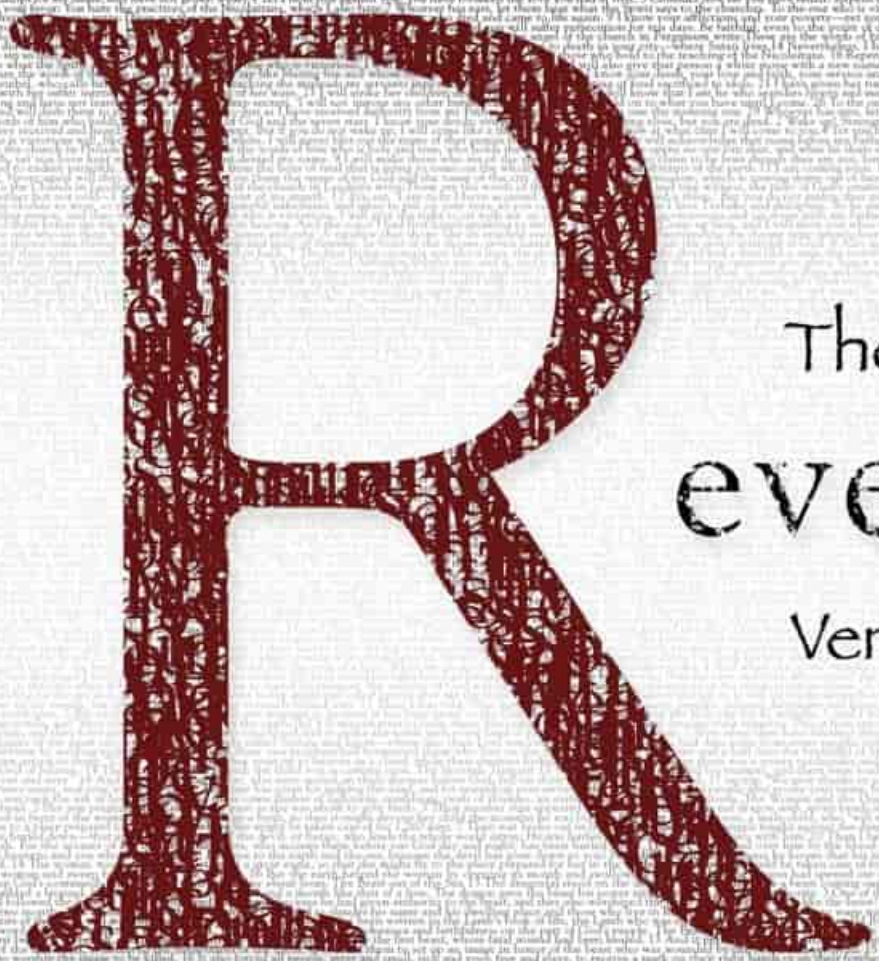

The Book of Revelation

Verse by Verse

by Gary J. Hall

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION (1:1-20)

The foundation for the book (1-3)
Greetings to the seven churches of Asia (4-6)
Announcement of Christ's Second Coming (7)
The Lord's self-designation (8)

CHRIST AMONG THE CANDLESTICKS (1:9-20)

LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (2:1-3:22)
The church at Ephesus (2:1-7)
The church at Smyrna (2:8-11)
The church at Pergamos (2:12-17)
The church at Thyatira (2:18-29)
The church at Sardis (3:1-6)
The church at Philadelphia (3:7-13)
The church at Laodicea (3:14-22)

THE THRONE OF GOD (4:1-5:14)
God on the Throne (4:1-11)
The Lamb worthy to open the seven-sealed scroll (5:1-14)

THE SEVEN SEALS (6:1-8:1)
First seal: The white horse and its rider (Antichrist) (6:1-2)
Second seal: The red horse and its rider (6:3-4)
Third seal: The black horse and its rider (6:5-6)
Fourth seal: The pale horse and its rider(s) (6:7-8)
Fifth seal: The martyrs under the altar (6:9-11)
Sixth seal: Cataclysmic disturbances (6:12-17)
Interlude: Sealing of the 144,000, and the great multitude in Heaven (7:1-17)
Seventh seal: Silence in Heaven (8:1)

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS (8:2-11:19)
Seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets (8:2-6)
First trumpet: Third of vegetation destroyed (8:7)
Second trumpet: Third of sea creatures and ships destroyed (8:8-9)
Third trumpet: Third of rivers and springs become bitter, many people die (8:10-11)

Fourth trumpet: Third of sun, moon, and stars struck (8:12)
Three-fold woe announced (8:13)
Fifth trumpet (first woe): Locusts from the Bottomless Pit, sent to torment men (9:1-12)
Sixth trumpet (second woe): Four angels with an army of two hundred million, killing a third of mankind (9:13-21)
Another interlude (10:1-11:14)
The angel with the little book (10:1-11)
The Two Witnesses (11:1-13)
Seventh trumpet (third woe): The victory of Christ and His Kingdom proclaimed (11:14-19)

THE GREAT CONFLICT (12:1-14:20)
The Woman, the Manchild, the Dragon, and the rest of the Woman's offspring (12:1-17)
The Beast (Antichrist) from the sea (13:1-10)
The Second Beast (False Prophet) (13:11-18)
The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion (14:1-5)
Proclamations of three angels (14:6-13)
Reaping the earth's harvest, and the grapes of wrath (14:14-20)

THE SEVEN VIALS (15:1-16:21)
Prelude to pouring out the seven vials (bowls) of wrath (15:1-8)
First vial: Sores on those who worshipped the beast and his image (16:1-2)
Second vial: Sea turns to blood, all sea creatures die (16:3)
Third vial: Rivers and springs turn to blood (16:4-7)
Fourth vial: Men are scorched by the sun (16:8-9)
Fifth vial: Pain and darkness upon the Antichrist and his kingdom (16:10-11)
Sixth vial: Euphrates dried up, three unclean spirits gather the kingdoms of the earth for the Battle at Armageddon (16:12-16)
Seventh vial: Great earthquake, the great city divided, Babylon is remembered, cataclysmic events (16:17-21)

THE FALL OF BABYLON (17:1-19:10)
The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast (17:1-6)
The mystery of the Woman and Beast explained (17:7-18)
The fall of Babylon the great proclaimed and mourned (18:1-24)
The exaltation in Heaven over the fall of the Great Harlot (19:1-5)
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:6-10)

THE DEFEAT OF THE LAMB'S ENEMIES (19:11-20:15)
Christ the Victorious Warrior and King of kings (19:11-16)
The Beast, his armies, and the False Prophet are defeated (19:17-21)
Satan is bound for a thousand years, while those martyred reign with Christ (20:1-6)
Satan released to deceive the nations once more, but is finally defeated once for all (20:7-10)
The Final Judgement (20:11-15)

THE ETERNAL DESTINY OF THE REDEEMED (21:1-22:5)
The New Heaven and New Earth, the New Jerusalem, God dwelling with His people (21:1-8)
The New Jerusalem described (21:9-27)
The Water of Life, the Tree of Life, and the Throne of God and the Lamb (22:1-5)

CONCLUSION (22:6-21)

The time is near (22:6-11)
The testimony of Jesus, the Spirit, and the Bride (22:12-17)
Warning not to tamper with the book (22:18-21)

Introduction

This Book is all about revealing rather than hiding things. Jesus Christ was revealed to man in the Gospels, but here, in the Book of the Revelation, He is going to reveal the future. The word “Revelation”, Greek: “Apocalypse”, means “Unveiling” as in “Revealing”, yet many theologians persist in approaching the book as though it is mysterious and beyond comprehension.

The apostle John penned this book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16). The date of writing is around 96 A.D., which is contested by those who take the historical interpretation of the book. If John wrote Revelation before Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, then all the prophecies would seem to have all taken place in 70 AD, and therefore would have no relevance after that date. Yet, if the Book was written around 96 AD, then the prophecies must apply to still future events. In this commentary we will study Revelation from a futuristic perspective.

The initial audience, as listed in chapters 2 and 3, are the seven churches of Asia Minor, but the teaching will directly apply, in one way or another, to churches throughout history until the Rapture.

We will approach this Book of the Bible, as we do all other books, as Literal, as opposed to symbolic. We may not understand everything, but we can believe it, and take it’s message seriously!

We will be using the King James Bible throughout. While there may be reference to other translations, and other languages, our reference point will be the infallible, preserved Word of God, the King James Bible.

The following is the foundation on which this commentary is based on:

The soon Rapture of the Church which will take place without warning (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The “mystery of iniquity” which will set in on this earth and will increase rapidly as described in 2 Thessalonians 3. The Antichrist will appear during this time as a conqueror of all the world’s problems.

Israel will be safe in its own land. The Antichrist will make a peace pact with Israel protecting it from those who desire to destroy it. Daniel’s 70th week will be in motion as described in Daniel 9.

Judgement from God falls on this planet throughout the next seven years. God begins to punish the Gentiles and purge the Jews. The judgements are brought about by the commands of the two witnesses that appear during the first three and half years.

In the middle of the seven year period, called the Tribulation, the Beast (Antichrist) will break his covenant with Israel and set himself up as though he was God on the throne of the Mercy Seat in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The false prophet will appear on the earth, directing all worship toward the Beast. Once enthroned, the Beast will slay the two witnesses with the whole world watching.

The Beast will assume a world-wide dictatorship. During the last three and half years the worst of the judgements will fall on this world and its inhabitants, with the Jews being protected and fed out in the wilderness.

The Beast will prepare a massive army to wipe out the Jews in one final battle.

The Lord Jesus Christ will appear in the heavens with millions of battle-ready soldiers riding behind Him. These soldiers will do no fighting though, for the Sword that proceeds out of Christ’s mouth will devour the enemy completely.

The beast and the False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

Satan shall be bound in the bottomless pit for 1000 years, while Jesus reigns on the earth as King of kings during the millennium.

After the millennium, Satan will be loosed “for a season” and many will be deceived into following him in a rebellion against God at the final last war to end all wars - the battle of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38 and 39). At the completion of this battle, Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire, forever banished from this earth (Revelation 20:10).

All the unsaved of all time will then stand before God and be judged. They will then be cast into the Lake of Fire, to join the devil and his angels, in torment (Revelation 20:11-15).

This present earth and heaven will then be burned with fervent heat, and a new heaven and earth will replace it (Revelation 21; 2 Peter 3:10).

For the rest of eternity, God and His people will enjoy this universe as it was intended to be, yet without sin, and its curse.

Revelation 1

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.

"Revelation" means "uncovering" or "revealing". This is the revelation given by God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ. An angel received it from Christ and revealed it to the apostle John. John in turn reveals it to us. The Revelation concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, and end-time world events (both religious and secular) leading up to His Second Coming. "Must shortly come to pass" doesn't mean that the contents of the book would be completed in a few years, instead "shortly" is actually "swiftly" in the Greek (en tachei) and refers to the rapid progress of the events from when they begin.

God wants to teach those willing to be servants, not theologians who are proud of their education. If we come to the Lord with a right heart attitude, He will open up the entire Bible to us! Come to it in pride and God will be silent!

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

This message is for all Christians (and Bible-believing Churches) of all ages. It is a big mistake to see the Book of Revelation as an historical document relating only to the first century church. John wrote about what he heard and saw. The symbolism in Revelation is an aid to understanding the books literal truth. The visions therefore illustrate the words given to him by Christ.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

A blessing is pronounced on those who read, hear and study the words found in this book. This is the first of the seven blessings of the book (see 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Revelation 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

It is vital to obey them. But how can they be obeyed if we do not read them? How can they bless us if we do not bother to study them? Those who first learned about the contents of Revelation heard the words spoken as they gathered for worship. They were blessed in what they heard, but they also obeyed its teaching (compare James 1:22-25).

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he

is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

There would be no blessing if the book was too hard for anyone to understand. These words offer the believer information regarding the Last Times of world history. Since the time is at hand (imminent) we do well to take heed to them, for they reveal how we should respond if such events do come upon us. No wonder so few are prepared! The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the Rapture.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.

John writes these words to seven literal churches in Asia (though their application is for the church and Christian of all ages). These are the same seven churches we will study in chapters 2 – 3.

The greeting is directed from Heaven to earth, proving that Revelation is not an invention of John. John appears to be writing from that high position (Heaven via his vision). In this verse we see something of the eternal nature of God / Christ. The seven spirits are not likely to be the same as the seven angels who were over the seven churches, rather they are seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit. If they were angels then they would be called such. There might be a reference to Isaiah 11:2 here.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Faithful Witness not the leaders of the Cults. This means that the Revelation record is absolutely true. Since He is the only reliable source of eternal truth the information contained in this book is pure. It comes from the same Jesus Christ who died on the cross and spilt His precious blood for our salvation, not the sugar-coated Christ of the New Age Movement and false religion. This same Jesus is the Prince of kings or Ruler of kings (see the next verse). He is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16). Only through Him can a man be saved and set free from sin.

Notice that all the emphasis on Jesus Christ! This is a characteristic of a true Bible believing church. The cults put all the emphasis on "prophets", or some "pope", or someone that is trying to be "like" the most high God (Isaiah 14:12-14).

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

The focus must always be upon the One, who in love shed His blood on the Cross to save us, and to wash away our sins.

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

He has made us to be kings and priests. Some translations have "Kingdom of priests" (see also Revelation 2:26-27, 20:4 and 1 Peter 2:9).

Revelation 2:26-27 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

But notice that all dominion and glory belong to Him. Take notice of this 'Kingdom Now' people!

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

He is coming with or in the clouds. This speaks of the Shekinah glory of God. This is not referring to the Rapture. He will come from Heaven – beyond the physical universe, beyond time and space, not from another planet as some Faith and Prosperity teachers teach.

Some suggest that the Day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the Second Coming, but this verse proves that theory false. Why? Every eye will see Him (Matthew 24:30).

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Every person of every nation will see the Coming of Christ Jesus. Television and the Internet will no doubt play a major part in this. The Jewish nation will see Him as the one they crucified and rejected (Zechariah 12:10).

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

The whole world will cry bitter tears when they see Him. What fools they have been for rejecting Him! All, except for believing Jews and Gentiles, will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever. Why? Because they have followed the antichrist [the beast] instead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of all things. This title is used exclusively of God in the Old Testament and speaks of His externality and omnipresence (see Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12-13).

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isaiah 48:12-13 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

He was there at the beginning (Genesis 1) and will be there at the end (Revelation 22:21). He is the Eternal Lord and God – The Almighty – The Great I AM. Wake up, Mr. Jehovah's Witness!

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos by the Romans, a small island close to Turkey which is only about sixty square miles in size. The occupants of the island were criminals who were forced to do hard labour in the mines. This was during the 1st. century persecution of believers by Rome. It is remarkable to note that as Rome began the Christian era troubling the saints, so too will she at the close of the Church Age. She (the Vatican) will be behind the worst time of tribulation the true church of God has ever experienced. John was exiled there because Rome didn't like his teaching about Jesus as Lord.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

John was caught up in the Spirit on the Lord's Day to see this vision. The "Lord's Day" is often interpreted to be Sunday by some, but it is more likely to mean the day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns (see Revelation 4:2). The phrase "in the Spirit" (compare Ezekiel 37:1), as opposed to being "in the body" (2 Corinthians 12:2) reveals that John was spiritually caught up to see the Day of the Lord (the Millennial Reign Of Christ on earth (2 Peter 3:8).

Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

It is probable that the apostle was spiritually transported to see what was going to take place at the end of the ages. So John saw what we are experiencing today! He heard a trumpet-like voice speaking with him (see Exodus 19:16,19, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Psalm 47:5).

Exodus 19:16,19 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. [19] And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Psalm 47:5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Christ declares Himself to be the Pre-eminent one. There is none before Him, and there is none after Him. John was commanded to write to the seven churches of Asia Minor, which would be situated today in Turkey. These Churches are typical of all Christian churches throughout the past 2000 years. Many commentators suggest that the seven churches represent seven church ages. Please see the note that introduces chapter 2 for brief explanation of this view.

The names of the seven churches have the following meaning: (1) Ephesus – “fully purposed”. (2) Smyrna – “myrrh”. (3) Pergamos – “much marriage”. (4) Thyatira – “odour of affliction”. (5) Sardis – “red ones”. (6) Philadelphia – “brotherly love”. (7) Laodicea – “human rights”. If the “Church Age” view is correct, then Jesus will return during the Laodicean period.

It should be remembered that John was writing to seven literal churches in his day, but the message of Revelation is for all ages. Therefore, they can be seen as seven types of churches that exist today throughout the world. Every place that calls itself a “church” will fit in one of these seven church types. This is the most practical aspect of this study because we will be able to test ourselves according to God’s standard of how He expects a church to be.

The book mentioned in this verse is the one we are studying right now.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

On turning to see the one to whom the trumpet-like voice belonged, John saw seven lampstands. These would have had the appearance of seven individual lampstands instead of the usual seven-branched candlestick (menorah) of Judaism, since these are Gentile churches rather than Jewish. The candlesticks represent the churches because they were meant to take the glorious light of the Gospel into the world (Matthew 5:16).

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

In the midst of the lampstands he sees the Lord Jesus Christ walking about. Jesus is always in the midst of the true church (Matthew 18:20).

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

“Son of Man” was Jesus’ favourite title and it is used 81 times in the Gospels. It is a Messianic title derived from Daniel 7:13.

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

The lampstands represent the seven churches; therefore Christ is active within His churches. It is in the church that He manifests His presence today. He is seen wearing a golden breastplate, though some interpreters view this as a golden sash about His chest. Just like the high priest of the Old Testament, the Lord wears the Great High Priest’s breastplate. He is the only priest we have to do with! Both the breastplate and His robes represent His eternal righteousness and authority as the believer’s priest. They also indicate that He is the King.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

His hair as white as wool, as white as snow. This does not mean that His hair was like the white fluffy hair of the counterfeit Christ – Father Christmas! John is describing the appearance of His majestic glory. White hair represents both wisdom and glory in the Old Testament. His manifestation is similar to the ‘Ancient of Days’ (Daniel 7:9,13,22).

Daniel 7:9, 13, 22 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. [13] I saw in the night visions,

and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. [22] Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Therefore His white hair must speak of His eternal nature too.

His eyes can burn into even the darkest places of our hearts. His x-ray vision can see the true nature of the heart. He can see even the most hidden of our secret sins. His eyes were like a flame of fire, which speaks of His holiness. God alone can look into our souls to see what we really are. This searching will be very evident at the Judgement Seat (1 Corinthians 3:13).

1 Corinthians 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

His feet are like polished bronze (Daniel 10:6).

Daniel 10:6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

This speaks of His steadfastness and faithfulness. He will always be strong towards His people. He can always be relied upon. His voice was like many torrents of water converging into one gigantic waterfall (Daniel 10:6). This is the voice of absolute authority and power. He is the Judge of the Churches and so He moves among them to reveal what is right and wrong.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

He holds the seven stars in His right hand. The stars represent the angels over the seven churches. Some see the angels as the pastors over the churches since the word simply means ‘messenger’.

From His mouth is seen a sharp two-edged sword. Both the stars in His hand and the sword in His mouth symbolise the fact that He alone has the authority to govern, guide, and discipline His church. His word (the Bible) is the church’s final authority in faith and practice (Hebrews 4:12).

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

If it is not in Scripture we must reject it. His word cuts out false doctrine and all that offends the truth.

John had seen the face of Jesus shine in beautiful majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2, John 17:5).

Matthew 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

He knows whom he is seeing. The apostle Paul had a similar experience on the Damascus Road. Here we truly see a vision of the glorified Christ. What kind of Jesus do you see in the word?

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

All who ever saw the glory of God in this fashion have fallen upon their faces before Him. This is exactly what the disciples did on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:6).

Matthew 17:6 And when the disciples heard it , they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

Such awesome glory produces godly and holy fear in the human heart. The Lord does not want us to terrified of Him, but He does expect reverence.

First and Last is a phrase used of Almighty God in Isaiah 44:6,

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Therefore its use here reveals Christ's equality with God (see also Revelation 2:8, 22:13).

Revelation 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.

Revelation 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Our relationship is with the Almighty and Eternal God. Jesus is both the Creator and the Consummator of every thing.

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The First and Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty, is the same person as "He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am

alive for evermore". This Jesus who is the Beginning and the End, who died for our sins, rose on the third day, never to die again, He is the Eternal God. He has the authority over every person's eternal destiny.

On the day He descended into Hades to proclaim His victory, Jesus set free the righteous whom it kept incarcerated (see Psalm 16:10, Luke 16:23-26, Acts 2:27, Ephesians 4:8-10, Hebrews 2:14-15 and 1 Peter 3:18-20).

Psalm 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Luke 16:23-26 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Ephesians 4:8-10 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Hebrews 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

1 Peter 3:18-20 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

He has the Keys of Death and Hell – not Satan, for Jesus Christ conquered death and Hell.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

John is once again commanded to record everything he sees in the visions. The fact that the command is repeated proves just how important the book of Revelation is to the Church of Christ. Not to receive it is to blatantly disregard the very word of God for our generation.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

“Mystery” here simply means something that mere human logic and intelligence cannot fathom out. It requires divine revelation.

Jesus reveals to John the meaning of the first symbols in Revelation. The seven stars represent the seven angels who are over the seven churches. There may be a dual interpretation here. The angels may represent real angels – there is no real reason why this should not be so, for God has promised to give His angels charge over us (Psalm 91:11, Hebrews 13:2).

Psalm 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Hebrews 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

It is entirely possible that God has placed an angel over every Bible-believing congregation. The other interpretation is that the angels (messengers) are simply the ministers or pastors of the churches. The major problem with this theory is that the Bible never calls men angels.

The seven golden lampstands symbolise the seven churches. Why are only these churches mentioned? What about the Jewish Church, the Roman Church and the Greek Church? (a) The Jewish Church became legalistic. (b) The Roman Church paganised Christianity. (c) The Greek Church went after Gnosticism. Notice, too, that God has rejected the so-called orthodoxy of the three mentioned.

Revelation 2

Though the churches mentioned in Revelation chapters 2 and three contain a message for all churches of all ages, we have to acknowledge that, as most theologians suggest, they may refer to seven “church ages”. With this in mind, you will find a short note at the end of each letter to the seven church. You might want to study this aspect of church history yourself.

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

To the Church of Ephesus the Lord describes Himself as the One who holds the seven stars (angels) – the One who inspires and authorises them regarding their ministry to the church. He is also present in each of the seven churches.

Ephesus was a city dedicated to the worship of Diana (see Acts 19). The apostle Paul ministered there for three years, after which Timothy pastored the church for a year (1 Timothy 1:3).

1 Timothy 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

From his prison cell in Rome, Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians in 61 AD.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

The Lord Jesus now lists several good and bad points regarding the Church at Ephesus:-

The Good Points

a) They were working hard for the Lord. This probably means that they were diligent in all aspects of Christian ministry.

b) They laboured on despite personal difficulties.

c) They endured even when they were being assaulted by those of this wicked city – i.e. pagans and idolaters. They had stood firm in the Lord for over 40 years.

d) They had no place in the Church for wicked men, those who attended Christian worship but also accommodated the world and false religion. This means that they did not compromise with the paganism all around them.

e) They did not accept all who claimed to be preachers of righteousness but judged each one according to what the word of God said (see Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1).

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Paul had warned the Ephesians church that false teachers would attempt to corrupt them (Acts 20:28-31; see also 2 Corinthians 11:13).

Acts 20:28-31 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

Notice that the church of Ephesus is commended for its intolerance. No doubt the modern, lukewarm church would take issue with the Lord over this. God commends the church for being intolerant, and using discrimination against people who profess to be something they are not. Intolerance isn't the same as bigotry when it's established in Scripture.

f) By this method they were able to spot false teachers a mile off.

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

g) They stood their ground in Christ regardless of how many were giving themselves over to unrighteousness and compromise.

h) Their patience (endurance) is remarked on again. They were leaving everything firmly in the hands of the Lord – they had patient trust.

i) They laboured for Christ's sake and refused to give up no matter how hard it became to stand. They had taken up the Cross and continued to follow Christ even in the midst of intense persecution and suffering (Matthew 16:24).

Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

The Bad Points

a) They had left their first love. Notice they they had “left” rather than “lost” their “first love” for Christ. This infers that they had chosen something else as the passion of their hearts. Paul had commended them for their love thirty years earlier (Ephesians 1:15-16).

Ephesians 1:15-16 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

Sadly this Love had soured somewhat. This may mean that they had become ritualistic – that everything they did was out of duty rather than from a love for God. Their love for God was growing cold through religion.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

b) They had fallen (backslidden). Backsliding happens when a church gets itself involved with false doctrine, religion, or become content with routine.

The Remedy

a) Remember. They needed to reconsider their standing before God, to look back and see how far they had come away from God’s

grace. The word “remember” here means “continually remember” or “never forget”.

b) Repent. A backsliding church needs to repent of the way it is going – it needs to get right with God as a congregation, not only as individuals. They needed to increase their love for Christ. c) Return. Get back to the beginning. Get back to the place where it is known we walked away from God. By return or reversing, they will renew their love for Christ.

The Warning

a) They must act quickly because the Lord certainly will! There was no time for putting it off for another moment, because God cannot put off His judgement any longer.

b) They would be removed as a church if they did not repent. Their spiritual light would be extinguished and the ‘star’ would no longer minister within them. Immediate repentance was a must. Otherwise their usefulness to Christ would quickly come to an end.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Major Good point

They rejected false doctrines and practices of the Nicolaitanes (ritualists and clergy-class / priest-craft) and the name implies “suppressors of the people”. There is no recorded sect with this name, so it is likely to be a generic term for a class of apostates. The Nicolatianes condoned compromise with the pagan cults. The Ephesian church resisted this and so were commended by the Lord. This was one thing in their favour that was delaying the coming judgement.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The Rewards

Every believer must listen to and be guided by the Holy Spirit since He inspired the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:21).

2 Timothy 3:15-17 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

He can only lead us into the truth (John 15:16; 16:13).

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

a) To those who listen to the message (in all the churches) will receive God's eternal reward. This reward is only available to the overcomer – the one who bucks the downward trend of religion. Overcoming is essentially the same as faithfulness and obedience. As believers we are meant to be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37-39).

Romans 8:37-39 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,

nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Bible urges us to overcome evil (1 John 2:13) by our faith in Christ (1 John 5:4).

1 John 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The martyrs of Revelation 12:11 are overcomers too because they maintained their faith in Christ.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

b) They will receive spiritual food of everlasting life here and would enjoy the glories of God in Heaven. Whilst on earth they would know the eternal truth that sets the soul free. The Tree of Life reminds us of Eden from which man was cast out. Thankfully we have access to the one in the New Jerusalem which is situated in Paradise (Heaven), which interestingly enough means “garden of delight” (Revelation 22:2).

Revelation 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Note: This church represents clearly the period from 33 AD to 200 AD, which includes the Apostles, and then the "Church Fathers". This church period emphasised Doctrine, and labouring for Christ.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Smyrna was situated about 35 miles north of Ephesus and was a very prosperous commercial centre in the Roman Empire. The Christians here were persecuted by almost everyone because they refused to declare that Caesar was lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ gives a description of Himself in this verse. This three-fold description is one that the church of our day needs to remember. It is an important part of Christology.

a) His Eternal Nature – First and Last – the Eternal God. He has and will always exist.

b) His Messiahship – He was crucified for our sins.

c) The Risen Lord – His glorious resurrection.

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

<u>Good Points</u>

a) They worked hard for the Gospel's sake. This was not salvation by works (which all false religions promote), but working as a fruit of being saved. They were simply doing what Christ expects from all His churches. He sees and is aware of the circumstances of all believers.

b) They were persecuted for their Christian faith in Smyrna, but this did not stop them from serving the Lord – it probably gave them even greater determination to get the the message of the Gospel out to their city.

c) They were not a wealthy congregation by any means, yet they used what they had to advance the truth. In God's eyes they were spiritually rich and were laying up treasure in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-20).

Matthew 6:19-20 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

d) They stood firm even when being opposed by the Jews and pagans in the city. The Jews especially hated Christ and thought that they were doing God's will by persecuting Christians. They were continually blaspheming His holy name. In reality they were on the pay roll of Satan – doing his business. They may have been Jews by lineage, but they were far from being the children of Abraham. Their religion was false, therefore they had the nature of Satan. It is possible that these "Jews" were Gentile converts to Judaism, and very often such people can be extremely zealous to please their masters.

<u>Bad Points</u>

There are no bad points mentioned regarding this church.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

<u>Rewards</u>
They were obviously fearful from a physical point of view, so the

Lord encourages them to be fearless in the face of even worse persecution. The devil was doing his utmost to destroy the church and thus extinguish its witness. The whole Church, and not just the one in Smyrna, would suffer extreme persecution under ten Roman emperors: Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Septimus Severus, Maximin, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian and Diocletian.

a) These persecuted believers would receive the Crown of Life if they maintained their faith in the face of such onslaught. Their faith in Christ would dispel the fear of imprisonment and death. Tradition tells us that Smryna's second pastor, Polycarp (one of John's converts and students), was burned alive in AD 155 for not worshipping the emperor.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

b) The first death is physical, but the second is eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. Faith in Christ is the guarantee than believers will never experience the second death.

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

The overcomer may indeed die at the hands of his tormentors, but that is all that can happen. Dead but not destroyed. The true believer has no fear of death and Hell. We are free from the fires of the eternal lake of fire and brimstone.

Note: The Smyrna period lasted from 200 to 325 AD, and consisting of ten official Roman persecutions against the Christian Church. This is the “martyrs” Church.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Pergamos (Pergamum) was once the capital city of the Asian province of the Roman Empire. It had a huge library containing more than 200,000 books.

The Lord is seen with the sharp two-edged sword in His hand. This is an obvious reference to the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 19:19-21).

Ephesians 6:17 The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

We must also include the idea of the Sword of Judgement. The reason for this is because this church had become heretical and needed to be judged and disciplined.

Revelation 19:19-21 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

13 I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Good Points

a) They worked for the Lord in a very difficult location. It seemed that Pergamos was the very headquarters of Hell on earth. This was due to the high level of satanic and occultic practices in the area. It was also home to the temple of the god Asclepius whose image was of a serpent, just like Satan (Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3).

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

It is said that the Throne of Zeus (probably the largest altar in the world at that time) stood on a hill overlooking the city. Since the population worshipped Caesar as a god, we can see just how steeped Pergamos was in false, demonic religion. It is believed that the priests of Ba'al and other gods moved to the area after the Persians captured Babylon.

b) They held fast the name of Christ as the only way of salvation.

c) They remained faithful to Christ and did not deny Him even when suffering severe persecution for not participating in the pagan festivities. This was seen as being disloyal to the state. They had seen the death of fellow Christians but kept their faith nevertheless. Tradition says that Antipas was roasted to death inside a brass bull

placed over flames. This method of killing victims was in fact part of the pagan sacrificial system and copied from ancient child sacrifice practices.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Bad Points

a) They fellowshipped with false teachers and prophets. They even allowed them into the Church of Christ! The false teachers were laying snares that would eventually trap them in immorality, idolatry and intermarriage (Numbers 22-25; 31).

By intermarrying with the Moabite women, Israel fell to the pagan deities of Moab.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

b) They also allowed the clergy-class to rule their thinking instead of being guided by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Gnostic teachers (the Faith Teachers of the day) were corrupting them. As stated previously, the Nicolaitanes saw nothing wrong with compromising with false religion. They were the interfaith ecumenists of their day.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

The Remedy

a) Repent. They needed to get rid of these false teachers and doctrines. If they did not then Christ would act against them with the two-edged sword.

b) Do it quickly. They must act quickly because Jesus would act quickly. Do they really want to find the Lord fighting against them? They must separate from falsehood. Did they really want Jesus to fight (war) against them?

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

<u>The Rewards</u>

a) Hidden Manna = The spiritual food of God instead of the corrupt servings of the false teachers. Not the food offered to false gods, but the spiritual sustenance given by the True God (John 6:33, 35, 41, 48, 51).

John 6:33,35,41, 48, 51 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. [35] And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. [41] The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. [48] I am that bread of life. [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

b) A New Name on a white stone. White stones were sometimes given to winners of games so that they could gain admittance into the celebratory feast. This would be proof of their citizenship in Heaven. Therefore it needed individual members of this church to get right with God before it was too late.

Note: The Pergamos period lasts from 325 to 500 AD, and marks the rise of the Roman Catholic Church. The marriage of “Church”

and “State” came about at the counsel of Nicea in 325 AD under Constantine.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.

Thyatira was an important commercial hub in the Roman Empire. It’s main industries were wool and dye (Acts 16:14).

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us : whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

The letter to this church is the longest of the seven. Jesus describes Himself as “the Son of God”. This title not only made a claim to Messiahship, but also to His equality with God. The title has its obvious meaning, but it should be seen as “of the same order” too.

He comes before this church as the Searcher of Hearts. His eyes burn deep into every soul and mind (1 Corinthians 3:13).

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

He stands as the pure and unchanging Lord, as indicated by the fine brass or burnished bronze. His word is firmly established. Christ’s Kingdom is firmly established (unlike the kingdom of iron and clay.)

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Good Points

a) They laboured for God. They were a church which believed and lived the Good News. These good works were a result of their ongoing commitment to Christ.

b) Charity. True Christian love amongst each other.
c) Service. They were willing to be servants of Christ and to each other. This speaks of their humility and meekness.

d) Faith. Their faith was manifest. They really lived what they believed. They were not hypocrites.

e) Works. This maybe seen as their humanitarian service to the world. It is possible that this kind of activity was overdone at the cost of the spiritual. Christianity today has become just another humanitarian organisation instead of the vessel God uses to spread the Good News. These works are commendable but can never save the soul.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Bad Points

They allowed a false prophetess to minister in the Church. This woman (a Jezebel) was seeking to introduce idolatry and immorality. Queen Jezebel, wife of Ahab, in the days of Elijah, introduced Ba'al worship of a grand scale into Israel (2 Kings 9:22; 1 Kings 16:30-33).

2 Kings 9:22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

1 Kings 16:30-32 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

She is a fitting illustration of what was happening in Thyatira. This symbolism is a fine portrayal of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican (the harlot). It is also possible that feminism is referred to here, especially that which leads to goddess worship and pagan earth cults. This self-styled prophetess taught that obedience was necessary, so she downgraded truth and separation.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

The Lord gave this harlot system time to repent, but she did not. She loved her formalism and idolatry more than Christ. We should notice that there was a certain amount of Christianity about her to make her acceptable to the Thyatira Church.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

The Remedy

The Lord Himself would deal with the harlot / false prophetess / false teacher. The victims of false teachers are not considered innocent by Christ; notice “her”, “them” and “they”. Both the deceiver and the deceived will suffer the same punishment for refusing Christ. The Thyatira type churches in the Last Days will be full of people who are not born-again, and as a result will not be caught up in the Rapture, but will enter the Great Tribulation.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

All who follow false doctrine will experience the Second Death – eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire. This is meant as a warning to all the churches of Christ in all ages, for the Lord knows what is going on in every one of them. Each congregation and its individual members are accountable to the Lord for what they have or have not done (Psalm 7:9; Proverbs 24:12).

Psalm 7:9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

Proverbs 24:12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it ? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it ? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

Each person who follows false doctrine will be judged accordingly (Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6; Revelation 20:12).

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Romans 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the

depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

The Rewards

a) These rewards are only available to the overcomer. These are they that have separated themselves from false teachers and false doctrines. All false doctrines are part of Satan's schemes, lies and deceits that entrap the believer who will not stay in the truth. The 'Depths of Satan' may refer to the secret, mystical doctrines of the Gnostics which always led to immorality, idolatry and other gross wickedness.

b) The fact that the Lord speaks of putting no other burden upon them reveals just how severe a time they were already undergoing. The intensity of persecution caused some to compromise, but the Lord encourages them to stand firm. In certain ages it takes all the Church's strength to stand against the invasion of false teachers and prophets.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

This is why the Lord commands them to hold fast to the purity of the true word until He returns. This speaks of the imminency of His return.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

c) The overcomer (conqueror) will be given authority to govern with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12).

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him : if we deny him, he also will deny us.

It is His works we must do not ours (see :19 & :26), for it seems that believers that do not remain faithful will not fully participate in Christ's Millennial Reign.

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

The overcomer will rule over the nations that exist during the 1000 year reign of Christ on this present earth. The government will be under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ and will be one of absolute righteousness and justice (Psalm 2:9).

Psalm 2:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

All faithful believers will have authority under Christ.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

d) The overcomer will be given the 'Morning Star'. This probably means that they will receive spiritual light and understanding that comes from the person of Christ. Jesus is the Morning Star (Revelation 22:16).

Revelation 22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Believers receive the fullness of that which they received in part at salvation when they see the Lord face to face (2 Peter 1:19).

2 Peter 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

This message is for all the church of every age until Christ returns. Are we willing to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us through the Book of Revelation (and the other 65 books of the Bible)?

Note: The Thyatira period lasts from 500 to 1000 AD which is the heart of the “Dark” ages, and represents the era of Rome’s persecution of true believers.

Revelation 3

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

The Lord presents Himself as the One who is the authority and the upholder of the churches. It should be noted that the bad points appear before the good points in these churches. This is a reversal of the pattern within the previous chapter.

Sardis, once the capital of Lydia, was also a wealthy industrial city and its chief business was in wool, dying it and producing cloth from it. It was as pagan, if not more so, as the other cities mentioned.

The “seven spirits of God” is probably simply a reference to the Holy Spirit’s fullness, since the number seven is the number of perfection. As stated elsewhere, the “seven stars” are likely to be the seven angels over the churches, or else, as some suggest, the seven pastors of them.

Bad Points:-

a) They had a reputation in the church world of that day. They appeared to work hard for the Lord, but in reality they did it all for their own glory. They seemed like a vibrant and alive church, but in fact they were spiritually dead. They were outwardly alive, but at heart, they were dead (Matthew 23:27-28).

Matthew 23:27-28 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

The fact is, they were members of a vibrant church, but few were actually born again believers; not unlike most denominations today.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

b) They had failed to be watchful. This should also be seen as including watchfulness in prayer. They could recover themselves if they repented and got themselves right with God. This was their wake up call (Romans 13:11).

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

c) They had need of spiritual strength to uphold the doctrines of Christ. This speaks of the fact that they had compromised the faith by involving themselves in deception. This also could be remedied before it was too late.

d) They had arrived at this spiritual condition because they had become half-hearted regarding the Lord's work. Religious duty and spiritual pride had caused this imperfection among them. It also means that they had never completed what they had started.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

<u>The Remedy:-</u>

a) Remember. These believers needed to think back upon what they had received and heard regarding the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. They had been blessed by the Lord in many wonderful ways, but somehow they had let it all slip away.

b) Hold Fast. They needed to stand firm on whatever Biblical ground they were on. If this slipped from under their feet then they would have nothing at all. If there is spiritual weakness then it is important to at least build upon whatever ground we already maintain.

c) Repent. They needed to repent for all their past failures to live up to the truth. This includes sin, doubt, half-heartedness, and false teaching. This repentance had to be immediate or it would be too late for them.

d) Watch. This means to take a good look at themselves and to watch was happening around them. If they did not take account of these things, then the judgement of God would come suddenly, when least expected, upon them. Every generation of believers ought to be prepared for the Return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10).

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Good Point:-

They had a few worthy believers among them. It was probably their influence that was holding back the coming judgement. These saints had not defiled themselves by compromising with paganism. It is only those who have not defiled their garments that will reach Heaven and walk in robes of righteousness. Out of all the members

of the church in Sardis, these alone were worthy of the name Christian.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Rewards:-

a) The promise of being clothed in white robes would have been especially meaningful to them since the city manufactured woollen garments.

b) If the church would overcome then it would be blessed with the presence of God (even as the few worthy ones are promised). It was their choice either to stand for the Lord or to continue in sin.

c) Their names would never be blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life. All who are not in the Book of Life end up in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15).

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

All who reject the Truth will have their names blotted out (Revelation 22:19).

Revelation 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

If these people were saved, they would lose their salvation if they refused to overcome – be separate from the world and live for the Lord. The Lord's threat here is meaningless if it is impossible to blot a name out of the Lamb's Book of Life! It should of course be

noted that no Christian's name will be blotted out unless they have irrevocably rejected and turned against Christ.

d) If they obeyed the Lord then their names would be declared in Heaven. Only those who have their names in the Book of Life will be announced in Heaven.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

This message to the church at Sardis is applicable to every church also. Each person must listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to them through this letter.

Note: The Sardis period lasts from 1000 to 1500 AD, and consists of the final years dark ages, when the entire world was basically dead spiritually.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Philadelphia's chief deity was Dionysus, the god of wine, no wonder then that the city's main industry was wine. "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love". The city was named by King Attalus of Pergamum, the brother of its founder.

The Lord Jesus Christ describes Himself as:-

a) Holy. He is the only perfect and sinless one. This also speaks of His divinity and Lordship. Since only God is holy (Isaiah 6:3), Jesus must be God.

Isaiah 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

He is described as the “Holy One” elsewhere in the New Testament (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69).

Mark 1:24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Luke 4:34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

John 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

b) True. He is always faithful, but this title also describes the fact that He is THE TRUTH, totally unlike the numerous false gods that the pagans worshipped.

c) Keys of David. He has the supreme authority. He is the only Messiah for the people of Israel and the Gentile nations. He will one day rule from Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom – from the city of David (Isaiah 22:22; Matthew 1:1).

Isaiah 22:22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

d) He is the final authority, for He opens and closes the door of eternal life – something that is not within the power of any man. He also opens and shuts the door of opportunity for the church (Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3).

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 16:9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

2 Corinthians 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.

Colossians 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Good Points:-

a) The fact that there are no bad points mentioned deserves our notice.

b) They laboured for the Lord. They took every opportunity open to them to spread the Gospel of Christ. As a Missionary church, they used every possible means to get the job done. When God blesses a work there is nothing any man or devil can do to stop it (Acts 16:6-10).

Acts 16:6-10 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into

Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

c) They only had a little strength but they used it! They were not a mega-church, but they still saw the mighty power of God working in them. Human weakness is no hindrance for the powerful work of God to be done (2 Corinthians 12:9).

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

d) They kept the word. This not only means that they preached it, but also that they would not compromise the word of God.

e) They did not deny the Lord's name. Not only did they stand firm despite persecution, but they also continued to speak out the truth – that there was salvation in no other name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Rewards:-

a) Every false teacher would one day have to submit to the true church. They will have to acknowledge that God anointed them. The false teachers will have to bow to the purity of the Gospel taught by true Bible-believers. Unfortunately all false teachings create the notion that those who follow it are superior and exclusively the people of God. This is especially true of Jewish Roots proponents who think they are more spiritual than others. God will prove that those who simply have faith are the ones loved by Him.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

b) They will be kept from the time of wrath that will come upon the earth in the last days. This promise of divine protection is only available to faithful believers. The definite article in “the hour” indicates that the church would be saved from a specific time of testing rather than from common trials and tribulations. The “all the world” part has not yet been fully fulfilled, therefore the “kept” part too finds its complete fulfilment at the close of the Church Age. This is reference to the Rapture since no true Christian will be appointed to wrath (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9).

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

c) If they remained faithful unto the coming of the Lord, then no one will be able to steal the crown of eternal life from them. We should be living in such a way that none of our rewards could be lost at the Judgement Seat of Christ. This calls for watchfulness. “Quickly” doesn’t necessarily mean “speedily”, instead the word means “soon”. The imminency Of Christ’s return requires us to be constantly prepared, ready to meet Him by living righteously and in purity (Titus 2:13-14).

Titus 2:13-14 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

d) Faithful believers would be the very pillars of faith in the spiritual temple – the Heavenly Temple (Revelation 21:22).

Revelation 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

e) They will be eternally kept and protected.

f) They will receive their new name, the heavenly name, which is linked to the name of God, the city of God, and the name of Jesus Himself. This must be a very special name indeed. It is our citizenship name for the Kingdom of Heaven.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

As with all the churches, this message applies to every believer in the churches. The Holy Spirit's voice must be heard in these final days of world history. We must be Philadelphian Christians and build a church worthy of the name of Christ by standing upon His true word.

Note: The Philadelphia period matches history from 1500 to 1900 AD, and is the age of the great evangelical revivals.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

Laodicea was an extremely wealthy city that operated in banking, wool and medicine.

The Lord Jesus Christ describes Himself as the TRUTH (Amen) to the Laodicean Church. Interestingly enough Isaiah 65:16 states that God is "the God of truth," which literally means "the God of Amen" in Hebrew. Only the Truth can correct a wayward church. As a result Jesus is the Faithful and True Witness – what He says is absolute truth, not a mixture of truth and error. He points back to His resurrection as proof for what He says is true, for the "beginning of the creation of God" refers to the Resurrection of Christ, but it also indicates that Jesus is the Creator of all things. The word "beginning" has the meaning of "the source" or "the originator" in the Greek text. "Arche" gives us our English word "architect" (see John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

The other possibility is that it refers to someone who has rulership such as in the word "archbishop" or "archangel". Maybe all of these

aspects of the word combine to give us a fuller understanding to what Christ truly is to His Church.

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Laodicea was fed by two springs of water, the hot spring from nearby Hierapolis and the cold, pure water of Colossae. The hot water was used for bathing and laundry, while the cold was for drinking refreshing water. Lukewarm water was considered to carry bacteria, so was avoided.

The traditional interpretation of this verse has been that the Laodiceans were being reprimanded for their neutrality or lack of zeal, that is, “lukewarm”, or sitting on the fence. The major problem with this is that Christ desired that they be either “cold or hot”, implying that both are acceptable to Him. This interpretation sees “cold” as a negative, the idea apparently being that Jesus either wants the readers to be either zealous or hot for Him or completely uncommitted, or in other words, cold. We can see that the usual interpretation is incorrect, for being “cold” here is a positive, and is as commendable as being “hot”. Simply put, the Lord wanted the church useful and fit for the purpose He has called it to.

<u>Bad Points:-</u>

a) Works. They did work for the Lord to some degree, but it was half-hearted. They were not particularly interested in spiritual matters, and this affected how they lived their Christian lives. They had become religious.

b) They were the “do-gooders” of their day. Today we would call them modernists and liberals.

c) They had enough Christianity to make it appear like they stood for God, but not enough to excite them to faithfully serve Him.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

d) God was sick and tired of their liberalism. To win friends and influence people they watered down the Gospel, but in doing so they were making God their enemy. Those who adopt humanistic tolerance will find that the Lord finds them offensive. Vomiting is never pleasant!

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

e) They were prosperous and thought that their wealth meant that God was blessing them. Their three main industries are highlighted here: gold, clothing and medicine (eye salve). This wealth and health culture led to moral complacency and spiritual poverty.

f) They were positive thinkers; they did not need God's help – they could do it all by themselves. Their religion made a god of self.

g) They were spiritually blind. They could not see the spiritual condition that they were truly in, since money blinded them from seeing their true standing before God.

h) They were spiritually destitute.

i) They were in a very miserable state before God, yet they claimed that they worshipped God, had His joy, especially since they had so many earthly blessings they thought came from Him.

j) Poor. They had physical wealth but did not have the riches of Christ – the true treasure from Heaven.

k) They were blind. They could not see that Satan had trapped them. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

l) They were naked. They claimed to have the righteousness of Christ but did not. They were as foolish as the king in “The Emperor’s New Clothes”.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Remedy:-

a) Listen. They must hear the counsel of God. This was their wake-up call before it was too late. Repentance and Revival must begin with listening to God’s word and putting it into action.

b) Pure Gold. True wealth come from God not in the earth’s materialism.

c) White raiment. This is the righteousness of Christ. He alone can cleanse a soul from sin and purify a Christian’s heart.

d) See. The Lord wants to open the spiritually blinded eyes just as He did the physically blind. If we come to Him, He will cause us to see what we are really like. We may not like what we see!

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Rewards:-

a) Jesus loves even this Church. Because He loves them He must rebuke and chasten (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:4-11).

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Hebrews 12:4-11 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us , and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

If they repent and become zealous for Him, then they would indeed be truly blessed. He is calling for real repentance here. not the half-hearted variety. Jesus' love is unconditional on His part, but we must be in the right spiritual condition and position to receive it. Both repentance and zealousness are not optional but a requirement.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

b) The Lord offers each person the chance to renew fellowship with Him. We should be doing the knocking but instead we find Christ knocking on the door of our hearts (and individual churches). This text is not a Gospel verse that is meant to appeal to the unsaved to become Christians, instead the problem is with the church itself. Some have become so hardhearted that they no longer hear God's voice. Neither do they care that they have no fellowship with Him. The door is firmly bolted from the inside. Those who do respond to

His invitation will enter in to renewed fellowship with the Lord. We must allow Him into every area and situation of our lives.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

c) Those who do respond by overcoming the lukewarmness, will be blessed with the privilege of reigning with Christ. This means that He will exalt them in the Kingdom.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Again, this message is for all the churches who have similar situations. It is for all church (and Christians) of every generation until the Lord returns.

Note: The Laodicean period lasts from 1900 to today, and marks the most compromised time in church history. The church today professes the fundamentals of truth, but hardly ever lives up to them.

Revelation 4

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

John saw a door (portal or gate) opened in the sky. As it was opened he heard a trumpet-like voice speaking to him. The voice commanded that he ascend through the door into the very presence of the Lord. This trumpet reminds us that there will be such a call to the true church when Christ comes to Rapture it (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

John was to receive further instructions regarding the future events on earth, in the Church, and amongst the false religions. “After this” is probably a reference to all the events of the Church Age, and therefore the Rapture of the Church before the Great Tribulation. He was given revelation about last days events, such as: the Tribulation (Revelation 4-18), Christ’s Second Coming (Revelation 19), Christ’s Millennial Reign (Revelation 20), and the eternal state (Revelation 21-22).

2 And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Instantly John is transported through the door into third Heaven itself, the abode of God (2 Corinthians 13:2).

2 Corinthians 13:2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare.

He stood before the throne of God, and saw someone seated upon it. John's physical body remained on the Isle of Patmos while he received this vision. Once in Heaven, the first person he sees isn't some dead relative welcoming him in, but the Sovereign God seated upon His Throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

The figure he saw had the appearance of glorious beauty that mere human language cannot describe. The gemstones seek to describe the unspeakable glory of God, as does the green-coloured throne itself. A Jasper stone was placed in Aaron's breastplate (Exodus 28:20).

Exodus 28:20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings.

The walls of the New Jerusalem are built with it (Revelation 21:18-19).

Revelation 21:18-19 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald.

The sardine is a ruby-like gemstone. A green tinted rainbow surrounds the throne (see Ezekiel 1:28).

Ezekiel 1:28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round

about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it , I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

This rainbow speaks of God's mercy and His promise. The rainbow was first seen after the Flood of Noah's day. The rainbow is only mentioned four times in Scripture, and each time it is connected with judgement on earth and the accompanying mercy. The sight that greeted John revealed the glory of God in a way he could, in part, understand. "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104:2).

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

Twenty-four elders surround the throne. They are real redeemed men and not a symbol of something else as some suggest. These men may refer to the twelve leaders of Israel and the twelve apostles of Christ. They are obviously exalted saints since they are clothed in white and wear golden crowns – both of which are symbolic of imputed righteousness and eternal life. These men probably represent all who truly have faith in Christ. Revelation 1:6 refers to believers as "kings and priests" or "a kingdom of priests", which is in keeping with 1 Peter 2:9, which says that we are "a royal priesthood". It is interesting to note that there were 24 courses of priests in the first temple in Jerusalem (see 1 Chronicles 24:1-18).

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Various voices appeared to come from the throne. Are these the voices of the Trinity? Also flashes lightning and thunders proceeded from it. This speaks of the terrible judgements that were about to be unleashed upon the earth. The seven lamps are said to be the seven spirits of God. The seven spirits may represent the seven angelic messengers which God has placed over each of the

seven church or, as some believe, a reference to the Holy Spirit in His perfection. It is of great significance that the New Testament lists seven distinct titles for the Holy Spirit:

[1] The Spirit of Truth - John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

[2] Spirit of Holiness - Romans 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

[3] Spirit of Faith - 2 Corinthians 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

[4] Spirit of Wisdom - Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

[5] Spirit of Power - 2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

[6] Spirit of Grace - Hebrews 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

[7] Spirit of Glory - 1 Peter 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

The sea of glass is similar to what Moses saw when he came into the presence of God (Exodus 24:9-10).

Exodus 24:9-10 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

Around the throne there are four living creatures. These are angelic beings (cherubim, seraphim or some other class of angels). They were able to see in all directions without turning their heads, for they had eyes all around their heads. It is possible that these beings are the "watcher" mentioned in Daniel 4:13.

Daniel 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven.

The Cherubim may have been used as guards, for they kept man from reentering Eden after the Fall (Genesis 3:24).

Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

They appear to be guardians of God's holiness in Revelation 4:6.

They are always associated with God's presence, and indeed even Satan, before he revolted against God was "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezekiel 28:14-16).

Ezekiel 28:14-16 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of

God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

The first living creature looks like a lion, mighty and powerful. The second like a calf, faithful and obedient. The third like a man, intelligent and rational. The fourth like an eagle in flight, swift and clear sighted. Some commentators suggests that these creatures represent the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. This may not need interpretation, for they may literally be angelic beings around the throne. If we believe the throne to be literal, why not the living creatures? Remember, all of this is a revelation of the glory of God.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

The living creatures each had six wings. Ezekiel and Isaiah record something similar to this vision (Ezekiel 1; Isaiah 6:1-5).

Isaiah 6:1-5 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Eyes appeared to cover each of the creatures (or their wings). These living creatures continuously offer praise and worship to God. Their eternal song rejoices in the fact that God is everlasting and almighty. “Holy, Holy, Holy” here connects with Isaiah 6:3 and proclaims the absolute holiness of the Triune God. “Almighty” is used to describe God’s power and authority 56 times in the Bible. “Which was, and is, and is to come” means that He is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2).

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

He is the King eternal who alone is immortal (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16).

1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

They offer endless glory, honour and thanksgiving unto God. With such an insight to the surroundings that greeted John, it was important that he refocuses his attention on the One seated on the Throne, the Eternal God.

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying.

The twenty-four elders also bow before Him who sits on the throne. As a sign of their submission, they cast their golden crowns before

Him. This acknowledges that their righteousness and salvation comes from the Lord God who inhabits Heaven. This should always be our response to the Living God (Psalm 95:6).

Psalm 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

One day we are going to stand before His Throne and have our lives examined (Romans 14:8-10).

Romans 14:8-10 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The elders cast their crowns before the Lord as a sign that all they received came from and are truly His. We do not worship God in exactly the same way as the elders yet, but we can worship Him by presenting our complete lives to Him (Romans 12:1).

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

They also have a song to sing. Their song is all about Him who sits on the throne. All honour, glory, and majesty belong to Him. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Lord of everything. He is the one who created all things both in Heaven and on earth (Isaiah 44:24).

Isaiah 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things;

that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.

It is far better to believe what the twenty-four elders say than Charles Darwin! Because God is our Creator, we ought to worship and praise Him as such (Psalm 95:6-7).

Psalm 95:6-7 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice.

Why were we and all things created? This verse gives us the answer. It was His will and good pleasure to do so.

Revelation 5

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

In the right hand of God was a book; He alone is the legal custodian of Creation (Psalm 24:1).

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's , and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

It was sealed with seven seals. This is the book (scroll) that we are concerned with in this chapter of Revelation. Scrolls usually had writing on both sides, and the most important details were on the inside of them, while there was a summary of the contents on the outside. It should be noted that there are not seven scrolls, instead it is a single scroll sealed seven times. Such a scroll as this could only be opened by the one who owned it, therefore it is of great significance that Jesus alone could unseal it, and must Himself be God.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

A mighty angel (maybe Gabriel whose name means “mighty one of God”) cried out, “Who is worthy to unseal the scroll?” This scroll of prophecy regarding the seven judgements would remain unknown until someone could be found who is worthy. This exercise was for John’s understanding to show that no human or angel was capable of breaking the seals. Heaven already knew who was worthy to unseal the scroll. Indeed no redeemed man or angel is worthy enough to open the scroll. Since “there is none good but one, that is, God”, Jesus must be God (Mark 10:18).

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

No person (human) in Heaven, on earth, or in Hell was worthy to open the book – not even to look upon it. This shows that there are people in Heaven already, just as there are in Hell. It also proves that believers do not become “little gods”, for they are still not worthy to do as Jesus alone can do; they are not worthy even to look upon the book in God’s hands.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

John sobbed when he realised that no one would come forward to open the scroll. He must have reflected upon this as he considered his own person. Did he breakdown because he saw his own unworthiness too?

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

One of the twenty-four elders comforted him by encouraging him to look upon Jesus. Jesus, as the Lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9).

Genesis 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

He is the Root of David (Matthew 1:1; Isaiah 11:1, 10) – the Messiah, the Perfect Man, had the power to open the scroll.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Isaiah 11:1,10 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: [10] And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

He is victorious over Satan, sin and death through His blood which was spilt for sinners (Colossians 2:14-15).

Colossians 2:14-15 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

John turned to see the Lion of Judah, but instead he saw the Lamb of God. This Lamb is Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Jesus is called “Lamb” 27 times in Revelation. “As it had been slain” or “as though it had been slain” reveals that Christ will bear the scars of His crucifixion throughout eternity (Luke 24:40; John 20:20, 27).

Luke 24:40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

John 20:20, 27 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. [27] Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

The Lamb appeared to have seven horns and seven eyes. Animals use their horns as weapons against others or as a show of strength. Horns became symbols of power and authority in the ancient world. Since the number seven speaks of perfection and completeness, it is likely that the seven horns symbolise Christ’s total dominion and omnipotence.

Being omnipotent, the Lord sees everything, as the “seven eyes” may indicate. This is connected with the “seven Spirits of God”,

being the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit in the world, especially in delivering the message of salvation in Christ (Psalm 139:1-10).

Psalm 139:1-10 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

The Lamb, probably now in human form, came and took the scroll from God's hand. This means also, that He alone could read, interpret, and broadcast the message contained within the scroll. This part of John's vision can be compared with that of Daniel's when He saw the 'Son of Man" standing before the "Ancient of Days" to receive dominion, glory and the kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).

Daniel 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Immediately the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures took golden harps and vials full of aroma. Incense was burned each morning and evening in the Tabernacle (Exodus 37:25-26).

Exodus 37:25-26 And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about.

The aroma depicts the prayers of the saints. Our prayers are never forgotten before God (Psalm 141:2).

Psalm 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

They sang a new song to the Lamb of God who redeemed them at a great price (Ephesians 1:7).

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

They praised Him because He was worthy to open the scroll and reveal its contents, and also in anticipation of the final victory over evil. They worshipped Him as the Saviour of the whole world because His blood purchased salvation. This salvation was not for a mythical elect but for all men on earth who respond to the Gospel

call, since all have sinned and Christ died for all sinners (Romans 5:8; Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 2:6).

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

1 Timothy 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Notice that they come from all tribes, languages, people and nations, for God indeed loves the entire world (John 3:16).

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He wants them to be saved (2 Peter 3:9).

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

No wonder the Gospel of the Cross needs to be taken to all of humanity (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

They praised Him for making them spiritual kings and priests ready to inhabit the New Jerusalem. All true believers already are a “royal priesthood” and “a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:5-10).

1 Peter 2:5-10 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

They will reign with Him on earth throughout the Millennium and on the New Earth (Revelation 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12).

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

This worship caused the countless numbers of saved souls already in Heaven to rejoice also. The figure presented to us in the text simply means “myriads of myriads” or “one hundred million” (see Daniel 7:10).

Daniel 7:10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Job asks, “Is there any number of his armies?” (Job 25:3). The number might express a numberless host of people from our perspective rather than an exact figure. One third of the angels fell with Satan, but God’s angels are still an innumerable host (Hebrews 12:22).

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

They sang of Christ’s, power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. How could they honour Him this way if He were not God? Seven qualities are mentioned here and Christ possesses them in their fullness.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory,

and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

John heard the universal worship of the whole of creation (Psalm 148; 150).

Psalm 148 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 150 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

Every part of creation that took breath or was a living creature of any kind sang praise to the Godhead. Notice that such praise is eternal. It appeared as though the whole of nature rejoiced in God. The inhabitants of Heaven will never tire in worshipping the Lord.

There are four songs of praise sung before the Throne (4:11; 5:9, 12-13).

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Revelation 5:9, 12-13 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. [12] Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

The four angelic beings sang their Amen to the song of creation. The twenty-four elders bowed before God to worship Him again.

Revelation 6

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

Here John sees the Lord Jesus Christ (the Lamb), who alone was worthy, opening the first of the seven seals. Six of the seven seals are opened in this chapter, and each one describes increasing levels of tribulation for the world. We will not see the seventh seal opened until chapter 8. With regards to those mentioned in this chapter, there is an obvious comparison with Matthew 24, which deals with the same period. Note the following parallels: False Christs/Antichrist (Matthew 24:4-5; Revelation 6:1-2); Wars and rumours of wars/the sword (Matthew 24:6; Revelation 6:3-4); Famines and inflation (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:5-6); earthquakes (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:12-14).

As each of the seals is broken and that part of the scroll unrolled, one of the cherubim summon one of the four horses and its rider to begin fulfilling the prophecy. These four horsemen are usually known as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

The 1st Seal

John heard what sounded like a thunderclap behind him as this seal was opened. One of the living creatures invited him to take a closer look. This was so he could have a deeper understanding of the significance of the breaking of the first seal.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

He sees a rider on a white horse. Some believe that this depicts Christ, but in fact it is symbolic of the Antichrist (see Daniel 9:26).

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Some point to the fact that Jesus will ride a white horse in Revelation 19:11:

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

It is very clear that the scenarios are completely different, especially since Jesus returns at the end of the tribulation period.

Notice that he has a bow without any arrows. Most Bible-believing commentators suggest that this represents a false peace. It is possible that his kingdom will be set up without warfare since peace isn't removed from the earth until the next seal is broken. The Antichrist will conquer the world through false peace and maybe broker a treaty with Israel, without the need for weapons. Why? The world will think he is Christ – the Messiah. This begins the Tribulation (Daniel 9:24-27).

Daniel 9:24-27 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant

with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

This horseman will be given a crown, so it is probable that his peaceful approach will win the affection of the world and they will willingly accept his leadership. World dominance is the aim of the Antichrist (see Revelation 13). Any hope that they have found the answer to the world's problems is premature, for whatever peace the Antichrist brings will be short-lived. This thought ties in with 1 Thessalonians 5:3 exactly.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

We live in a time of national and international upheaval, so the world would love someone to appear on the world scene to offer peace and safety. It is the restraining influence of Biblical Christianity that inhibits the Antichrist appearing now, but once the Church is Raptured this restraint will be removed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until

he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Whatever power he has will ultimately be given to him by Satan (Revelation 11:7; 13:7).

Revelation 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Revelation 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

The 2nd Seal

The second living creature asked John to watch as Christ broke the second seal.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

John see a vision of a rider on a red horse, which symbolises bloodshed and war. This rider was sent to remove any vesture of peace from the earth. The peace brought about by the first rider

will quickly fade away as soon after he takes power. Even so, what this rider brings is only the beginning of what the world will have to endure (Matthew 24:8; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9).

Matthew 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Mark 13:7-8 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

Luke 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

Terrible wars will take place during this period. Men will be demonically inspired to kill one another. The “Great Sword” may point to the ultimate weapon of mass destruction. The earth will likely come to the brink of all-out nuclear war at this time. The sword may have something to do with Islam too, for wherever the religion goes unrest, violence and war follow. One of the major emblems of Islam is the sword. It is entirely possible that Islamic states, such as Iran with its nuclear facilities, will play a part in the removal of peace. It should be mentioned that Islam, though being antichrist in spirit, is not the Antichrist system spoken of in Scripture.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

The 3rd Seal

The third living creature called John to see the vision relating to the breaking of the third seal. In this vision he see a black horse and its rider holding a pair of scales. Famine usually follows war, but

after this world war, this famine will be the worst that has ever been experienced. This will cause rationing to be introduced, and as part of the process, the Mark of the Beast implemented (see Revelation 13). If we line up the events predicted in Revelation, we will find it is at this time the two witnesses will be proclaiming that these judgements are sent by God (Revelation 11:3-6).

Revelation 11:3-6 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The owner of the “voice” is not mentioned, but because the one speaking is in “the midst of the four beasts”, it is likely to belong to the Lord.

The “penny” or “denarius” was the daily wage of a labourer. This symbolises the great famine mentioned above, it will cover the whole earth during the Antichrist years (compare Lamentations 4:8-9).

Lamentations 4:8-9 Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick. They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.

Not only food shortage, but also water and probably economic disaster. All commodities will be extremely expensive. The days of prosperity and plenty will end. Many things we take for granted will be luxuries then. Few will be able to afford their basic needs. With famine comes starvation and death as we shall see.

Notice that oil is mentioned. This could refer to the fact that oil and fuel prices will skyrocket. It is interesting that the Middle East, especially Islamic countries, supplies most of the oil to the world. If the Antichrist is able to control and cut this supply, we can see just how devastating it would be to the economy of the world.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

The 4th Seal

The fourth living creature calls upon John to see the breaking of the fourth seal and the corresponding vision.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

John sees a pale, yellowish-green horse. The rider of this horse is named “Death”, which is reflected by the corpse-like colour. The three preceding judgements produce this death. It seems that this judgement adds yet another level of severe plaques on earth. This vision describes yet another great war and a famine. It will not be a world war since it only affects one quarter of the earth’s population. It is likely to be located in one place, maybe within Europe.

The consequence of Death is Hell. It is said that death claims the body, and Hell claims the soul. Wild animals play their part in killing humans. “Beasts of the earth” makes it literal rather than symbolic.

It is possible that the animals become demonically possessed, thus becoming wild. The death toll will reach to between 1.5 to 2 billion people.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

The 5th Seal

There is no mention of any angel calling John to view the breaking of this fifth seal. As the Lord Jesus Christ opens the seal John saw under the heavenly altar. There he saw the souls of the millions who are being martyred for the cause of Christ during the first three and half years of the Tribulation. These are described as being faithful. Not even the threat and fear of death could keep them from following the Lord. It appears that there is a conscious intermediate state for these people as they await the time when they will be united with their bodies.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth

These people desired to know when the Lord would judge the earth for the wickedness its inhabitants had shown towards Christ's followers. Being conscious, rather than in a state of soul-sleep (an heretical doctrine), they are fully aware of what is taking place both in Heaven and in earth. They also understand something of time. Those who persecute and kill believers think they have got away with it, but the judgement is coming! What a terrible punishment theirs will be!

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Notice that they have the white robes of the righteousness of Christ and because they are overcomers. The fact that they can wear robes in a purely spiritual state suggests that spirits are as tangible in the Heavenly dimension as our physical bodies are in ours.

They are encouraged to wait a little longer. Why? Because many more will be added to their number before the end has come. When the very last Christian martyr has paid the price then the Lord will pour out His wrath upon the world (see Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19).

Deuteronomy 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

Romans 12:19 Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

The 6th Seal

The Lord opens the sixth seal. Instantly a great earthquake rocks the earth (Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).

Matthew 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be and earthquakes, in divers places.

Mark 13:8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

Luke 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

This earthquake may activate dormant volcanoes as it fractures the earth's faults. This will cause many devastating and catastrophic disasters worldwide.

Volcanic activity on such a grand scale may be the reason why the sunlight is blocked – the ash fills the air and sky so that the sun cannot be seen (see Isaiah 13:9-10; Joel 2:31; Zephaniah 1:15).

Isaiah 13:9-10 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

Zephaniah 1:15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

It is also possible that there will be a disturbance of the sun and moon as the sixth seal is broken. Thick darkness can obviously be a direct act of God – remember that this happened in Egypt in the days of Moses. Some suggest that these events could be caused by a powerful nuclear explosion, but it is probably better to allow the text to speak for itself and accept that God triggers the great earthquake Himself. The Greek word for "earthquake" is "seismos" meaning a great shaking (Isaiah 2:19-21; 13:13; Haggai 2:6).

Isaiah 2:19-21 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the

ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Isaiah 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

Haggai 2:6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

Many stars will fall upon the earth. These could be a swarm of meteorites or asteroids, though the Greek word *aster* seems to indicate the latter. Once again, while some see the "stars" as man-made satellites and the debris left up in space falling back to Earth, it is best not to read modern explanations into the prophecy. "Untimely figs" refers to the fact that this event will come suddenly and totally unexpected. There will be no news reports warning of this eventuality. It is obvious that there will be an increase of cosmic disturbances during the Great Tribulation.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Devastating climatic changes result. To John it appeared as though the sky was being rolled up like a scroll (Isaiah 34:4).

Isaiah 34:4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

This is the result of whatever hits the earth, and it seems that the sky will disappear for a while. No wonder there will be great fear.

Mountains will be moved and islands will alter their positions in the seas. It is certain that there will be great devastation throughout the earth as its tectonic plates are moved and the landscape changes rapidly.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

Everyone, regardless of status, will be in fear and totally panic stricken as these horrendous events take place. They will try to hide in shelters, dens and caves to protect themselves from what is happening (Isaiah 2:19).

Isaiah 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

There is no escape from what is taking place, for no shelter will hide them from the devastation. Maybe caves and mountains are not the best security since the earthquake is going to cause such upheaval!

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

They will be so afraid that they will go mad with fear. To die would be better than this! They pray that the tottering mountains would fall on them. The amazing thing is that they know that God is behind all of this! Almost everyone at this time will be a believer in God. They will know that there is only one true God who sits on the Throne of Heaven. They will know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, that is, the one who died on the cross for their sins, but they never actually repent. Those who have taken the “mark” obviously cannot.

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

They had heard that there was a coming judgement (and the end of the world), but they had dismissed it and mocked those who spoke of such things. They had refused to accept that God would punish them for their sins, but now they know that such a day of judgement has arrived (Joel 1:15; Amos 5:18).

Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Amos 5:18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.

Everything that preachers of the Gospel had said was coming to pass. They realise this too late, and what they are experiencing at this point is only the initial phase of the judgements that will be unleashed.

The events spoken of in this chapter cannot take place before the Rapture of the Church, therefore they will be the experience of those living through the Great Tribulation, otherwise, the Rapture cannot be much of a Blessed Hope (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Titus 2:13).

1 Thessalonians 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

This chapter acts as a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seal. It reveals two important details:

[1] The calling of the 144,000 Jewish male evangelists who will minister on earth during the beginning of the final three and half years.

[2] We are presented with a vision of the Tribulation saints in Heaven. The four angels will temporarily hold back the storm of judgement that is coming. It is the calm before the storm. Since the angels restrain the winds which control the earth's atmospheric circulation system, the event may coincide with the holding back of rain by the two witnesses (Revelation 11:6).

Revelation 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

A fifth angel appears out of the east. He had the seal of God with him. This seal (different from the seven seals on the scroll) is for the sealing of the 144,000. What the seal is isn't known, but it is likely to be spiritual rather than a literal brand. Some commentators suggest that the seal on the 144,000 will be physical, perhaps the name of Christ will be upon the foreheads. A seal such as this was

used to symbolise ownership in the ancient world (see 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14; 4:30).

2 Corinthians 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

This angel spoke directly to the four angels holding back the four winds. [Four corners = points of compass N.S.E.W.]

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The great calm will obvious cause peaceful atmospheric conditions, so that there will be no damage to the earth – the seas will be calm, and the trees will hardly flutter a leaf. The angel commanded the four angels not to release the four winds and storms until God had set His mark upon the 144,000. Notice: the antichrist will mark his followers around this time too (Revelation 13:16-18).

Revelation 13:16-18 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The devil never has anything new, he simply counterfeits the truth – how many fall for the false! In fact, the Beast's marking system may be based upon God's mark. Those who receive either mark are sealed for all eternity. The 144,000 will be sealed upon their

foreheads for their protection. These men must have a dynamic conversion to Christ and be quickly anointed with knowledge of the truth before beginning their short ministry.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

The 144,000 come from the literal twelve tribes of Israel. It is a precise number of male Jewish converts to Christ. It is utterly foolish to spiritualise these into any kind of Gentile believer or the church. They are literal unmarried men from the literal twelve tribes of Israel. To suggest otherwise makes a mockery of God and Scripture, for when the Bible lists twelve tribes, it is always the literal twelve tribes. These represent the first of latter day Israel's restoration (Romans 11:25-26).

Romans 11:25-26 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

This is why they are called First Fruits. God will especially use these unmarried male converts because they will not be hindered by family ties during these horrific days. They are called servants of God, for they will teach, witness and encourage others. They will be used of God to preach the Gospel in the Tribulation age, and it is likely that the martyrs of Revelation 6:9-11 are a result of their ministry.

Revelation 6:9-11 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said

unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

12,000 from Judah, 12,000 from Reuben, 12,000 from Gad.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

12,000 from Asher, 12,000 from Nephtali, 12,000 from Manasseh.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

12,000 from Simeon, 12,000 from Levi, 12,000 from Issachar.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

12,000 from Zebulun, 12,000 from Joseph, 12,000 from Benjamin.

Note: Joseph (who stands for Ephraim) replaces the original tribe of Dan. Dan became too wicked for God to use, so He cut them off completely (Leviticus 24:11; Judges 18:1-30; 1 Kings 12:28-29).

Leviticus 24:11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:).

Read Judges 18:1-18 in your Bible.

1 Kings 12:28-29 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

Also the name Ephraim is removed from the original list too, for similar reasons (Judges 17; Hosea 4:17).

Read Judges 17 in your Bible.

Hosea 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

That said, according to Ezekiel 48:1, the tribe of Dan will have its inheritance restored in the Millennial Kingdom.

Ezekiel 48:1 Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan.

It is interesting that Levi is mentioned, for originally they were excluded from receiving an inheritance. Since Christ fulfilled all aspects of the Levitical Priesthood, their service was no longer needed. Now, at long last, they come into their inheritance. These make up the 144,000 and ONLY these!

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

John's vision now focuses upon the Tribulation saints in Heaven. These will come to Christ after the Rapture of the Church, and probably through the preaching of the 144,000, and the availability of books and videos. Matthew 24:14 tells us that during the Tribulation the "Gospel of the Kingdom" will be preached around the world, which will be about salvation and the Millennial Reign of

Christ. It is wonderful to note that the number of people coming to Christ during the Tribulation years will be more than we can humanly number.

There are multitudes of people standing before the Throne of God worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb. These are the martyrs from the first three and half years of the Tribulation period. Their bodies are on Earth, but their spirits are in Heaven. The word "before" (*enopion*) speaks of their physical presence in front of God's Throne. They are dressed in white robes, which are the robes of overcomers. The palm branches point to both their victory and their celebration, for they have been victorious over the Antichrist and will suffer no more.

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

The glorified saints sing loudly before the Throne of God. Their song declares their thanks and praise for the wonderful salvation and victory received through Christ. Salvation cannot come by any other means but by faith in the finished work of Christ upon the cross, and victory over evil rests upon exactly the same foundation. Their sorrow has certainly been turned into joy (Psalm 126:5-6; Psalm 30:11).

Psalm 126:5-6 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalm 30:11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

This majestic declaration causes the angels, elders and the four living creatures to fall down before the Lord in worship also. We

must remember that redeemed sinners have an understanding of salvation that angelic beings can never experience.

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

They added their heartfelt 'Amen' to the praise of the redeemed saints. This 'Amen Chorus' includes the fact that God is worthy of all blessing, honour, wisdom, thanksgiving, power, and might for ever. "Amen" is a word that means agreement, but in this case it also affirms the total truthfulness and faithfulness of Christ, for He is the "Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Revelation 3:14).

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

One of the elders questions John about the great multitude dressed in white. Who were they? Where did they come from? It is not that he did not know, he simply wanted John to try to explain it for himself, for no doubt he was thinking the same thing.

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

John did not know the answer. One of the elders explains who they are. They are the ones who have faithfully served Christ despite having to live through persecution and torment. They kept the faith and have been washed through the Blood of Christ. They came out of Great Tribulation according to the KJV, but in fact the text should read, "the Great Tribulation " or "the Tribulation the Great", so these are not preTribulation saints, but of those who turn to Christ after the Rapture of the Church. Even so, they are true

believers since they trust in the finished work of Christ on the Cross (Romans 3:24-25; 5:9).

Romans 3:24-25 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

These Blood-bought saints, along with all the redeemed, always have direct access to God. They will serve Him day and night in the Heavenly Temple which will descend upon the New Earth. God will always be with them. This is a special promise, for God is always with the angels, but with the redeemed He has a better relationship – these were washed through the Blood of His Son.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Never again will they suffer. This means that the tribulation of the saints will affect the vast majority of believers living at that time. Hunger and thirst will be on earth due to people accepting the Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:15-17).

Revelation 13:15-17 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The Lord will feed, protect, and guide them throughout eternity. According to Psalm 23 "The LORD is [our] Shepherd", but here the Lamb is doing the shepherding. He will provide for all of His people throughout eternity (Revelation 21:6).

Revelation 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

All of their bad memories and experiences will be forgotten forever (Revelation 21:4).

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Whether this great multitude spend eternity on the New Earth or in Heaven itself, they will remain God's very special people.

Revelation 8

Seventh Seal:

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

This chapter reveals what is to take place at the breaking of the seventh seal. In chapter eight we will read of four of the seven trumpets and their corresponding woes. In this verse we notice that there will be a half hour silence in Heaven. We could call it the calm before the storm – Heaven is silent as it contemplates exactly what is going to happen next. All the inhabitants of Heaven know that God's wrath is about to be poured out upon the earth and they are awestruck by the severity of it (see Romans 11:22).

Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

This wrath will come in seven stages. An angel with a trumpet announces each stage. In Revelation 7 we heard the great choir singing praise to God, but in chapter 8 we hear absolute silence until the first blast of Judgement is announced (Psalm 76:8; Zephaniah 1:7).

Psalm 76:8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.

Zephaniah 1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God : for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

Seven trumpets are poised at the lips of seven angels. Trumpets were often used as a warning or call to arms.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

We see here another angel, who has a bowl containing incense. We know that this incense represents the prayers of God's people throughout the ages. These prayers were probably prayers of the Tribulation saints for deliverance from the hands of persecutors and tormentors. The words "all saints" may indicate that these prayers are from all dispensations where believers were persecuted for their faith. If so, it's encouraging to know that God never ignores or forgets the prayers of His own.

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

These prayers ascend up to God. It is important to note that, while an angel has the incense, it is only the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Heaven knows that it is now time for God to pour out His wrath upon the world.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Fire is mixed with the incense, which represents the Judgement. As the mixture is cast upon the earth there is heard the sound of voices, thunder, lightening and earthquake, which things are only the first stages of what is to come. This is payback time for those who have ill-treated the people of God. This is the signal for the wrath of God to begin as He purges the earth of evil.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets. God's patience has run out with an evil world that is intent on rebelling against Him. One by one the trumpets will announce a part of the unfolding and intensifying wrath of God.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

First Trumpet:

As the angel blew his trumpet blood, fire and hail fell upon the earth. This Judgement is very similar to that which the Egyptians experienced in Exodus 9:18-26.

Exodus 9:18-26 Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of

Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

Joel prophesied that there would be blood, fire and smoke during this time (Joel 2:30).

Joel 2:30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

This comes as a terrible storm destroys a third part of the trees and burns up all of the green grass, which will further deplete the world's food resources. It will literally set the region on fire (Joel 1:18-20).

Joel 1:18-20 How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Weather forecasters always mention how many trees are destroyed in major storms. Though this may sound like a catastrophic volcanic event resulting from the earthquake of verse 5, the words "cast upon the earth" suggest that the cause comes from above rather than from land. Some commentators suggest that this is caused by a nuclear explosion, but this seems unlikely. Either way, there will be great devastation and people will be in total fear and shock (Luke 21:25-26).

Luke 21:25-26 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Second Trumpet:

A great mountain of fiery rock will be cast into the sea [Mediterranean?]. This may be a meteor, though there are some who believe it to be some kind of huge missile or even another volcanic eruption. It is probably best to see it as a gigantic rock that comes from space – therefore a meteor, comet or asteroid. Whatever it is, it will cause a third part of the world's oceans to become contaminated. This contamination will make the water look like blood. Since God turned the River Nile into a blood-like substance (Exodus 7:17-21).

Exodus 7:17-21 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

Can He not do the same again without the need of modern technology?

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The impact and the pollution will kill off a third of the fishstock. It also appears as though it will quickly rust whatever shipping is located in that part of the world, adding to the economic disaster we have already noted in a previous chapter. The ships being destroyed may be caused by the resulting tsunamis after a gigantic rock hits the sea.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

Third Trumpet:

A star falls from space as the third trumpet is sounded. It will be on fire as it enters the earth's atmosphere and hits the earth itself. This may be another meteor or asteroid. Whatever its nature, it will contaminate a third part of the drinking water through the poison it contains. It is suggested that this heavenly missile will break up as it enters earth's atmosphere, so increasing its ability to spread its poison so quickly.

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

This star is given the name "Wormwood" because of the bitter taste of the water it contaminates. "Wormwood" or *absinthos* is a known herb in the Middle East, so it's likely that the Lord is using this as a comparison. It is a stupefying and lethal plant. This means that there may not be any visible sign that the drinking water is polluted, until it is tasted.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part

of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Fourth Trumpet:

The description here backs up the thought that all these things come from above, from space, rather than the earth itself. The events cause severe atmospheric disturbances. Maybe due to the meteor or asteroid, a third part of the earth's natural light is affected (that is, of the sun, moon and stars). This haze will affect only a third part of the day, meaning that during daylight hours about one third will be almost dark. It will be like extended night. It is obvious though, that God does not need natural events to bring about what this verse speaks of, He could just as well bring them about by His command. No doubt people will realise that such things are not natural or manmade occurrences, especially since the two witnesses will be preaching that they are plagues sent by God (Revelation 11:3).

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

During this thick darkness an angel will be seen flying around the earth. How will people still rebel against the Lord? It is interesting to note that the word "angel" in this verse is translated as "eagle" in some other versions of the Bible. Is this the fourth angelic being (cherub) mentioned in Revelation 4:7-8?

Revelation 4:7-8 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and

they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

He will be announcing that greater woes than these are going to be experienced by mankind. Against the backdrop of the terrible darkness, this brilliant angel will be a glorious sight – he will be the only light the earth will see for several hours. How terrified will earth's inhabitants be at his appearance?

Revelation 9

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

Fifth Trumpet:

Another star fell from heaven to earth. This time the “star” is personified. It must be an angelic being since “he” is given the key to the Bottomless Pit (the Abyss). Some commentators suggest that this is the same being mentioned in verse 11. Others think it may be Satan because of what both Isaiah and Jesus said (see Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 10:18).

Isaiah 14:12-15 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Luke 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

This fallen angel is given the key to the Bottomless Pit, which means that until this point it is in the possession of Christ (Revelation 1:18).

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Since He has the key to the Abyss until then, no geologist is ever going to locate it.

The Bottomless Pit (*Tartarus*) is where disobedient fallen angels are imprisoned awaiting the final judgement, (Jude :6; 2 Peter 2:4).

Jude :6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

These were the angels that went beyond the limitations imposed upon them by God at the beginning (Genesis 6:1-4).

Genesis 6:1-4 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

It is the same place that the demons feared to be sent when Jesus cast them out (Luke 8:31).

Luke 8:31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

The angel opens the bottomless pit. Here we find the worst of fallen angels are temporarily released. Somewhere on earth there is a

shaft (or several of them) which leads to the Pit (see Numbers 16:33).

Numbers 16:33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

As the door is opened a great plume of acrid smoke bellows out. Its appearance is like that of an erupting volcano. This vast evil vapour, like dense, black smoke, blocks out the sunlight.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Ascending out of the smoke there is seen hellish creatures that resemble grotesque locusts. These creatures are given the power to devastate mankind with their scorpion-like tails. These will cause great agonising pain to whoever is inflicted by them. These are not real locusts, but hideous angels dedicated to Satan's cause. Joel 2:1-11 offers us a graphic description of this same event.

Joel 2:1-11 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like

mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Even within such an terrible scene, God is giving the unsaved yet another chance to repent before it is too late.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

These locusts will not go after vegetation like the natural creatures they resemble, instead they will afflict mankind. Their mission is to sting everyone except the 144,000 (and it is likely that those who have repented through the ministry of these Jewish evangelists will be exempt too). Only these will be free from the power of this gruesome host. The 144,000, as we remember from Revelation 7, will be sealed and protected by God.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

The fallen angels have the power to kill but are commanded not to do so. They will relentlessly torment human beings for five months. It may take five months for the effects of the sting to fade away.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

The pain and agony will be so great that people will wish for death. They will try to commit suicide, but death itself will flee from them. For five months no one on earth will die, but will have to endure the severe torment inflicted by these locusts-like beings.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

The Appearance of the Creatures:

a) They have a horse-like appearance. They look like armour-plated war horses racing into battle (Joel 2:4).

Joel 2:4 The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

b) They have, what appeared to be, a golden crown upon their heads, which may be a sign of rank or authority.

c) They seemed to have human-like faces, which obviously confirms that they are not natural creatures.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

d) Their hair is as long as that of a woman. Jeremiah 51:27 states that locusts can have coarse hair-like bristles. The KJV calls these “rough caterpillars”.

Jeremiah 51:27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers.

e) They have teeth as long and sharp as a lion (see Joel 1:6).

Joel 1:6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

They will be the most evil predators the world has ever seen (Joel 2:2).

Joel 2:2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

f) They wear breastplates of iron, which is used to indicate that man will not have weapons powerful enough to pierce their body armour.

g) Their wings beat so loudly that it sounded like thousands of chariots racing into battle (Joel 2:5).

Joel 2:5 Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

This suggests that they will cause great fear at the sight and sound of them.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

h) As mentioned earlier, their tails look like scorpion's stings. For five whole months these creatures will afflict and torment mankind to the point of death without actually killing them.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

These entities have a ruler over them who leads them into battle. The ruler is a fallen angel named Apollyon (the destroyer). Only four angels are named in Scripture, Satan, Abaddon, Gabriel and Michael. It's interesting to note that one of the gods of the ancient world was called Apollo, and we know that such gods were simply fallen angels. His Hebrew name is Abaddon (and he is a bad-un). This being is not Satan, since he and the other angels are released from the Bottomless Pit, instead he is one of Satan's chiefs. Some have suggested that these creatures are John's way of describing helicopters, but few of the details fit that picture. It is better to see them as literal evil spirits of the most infernal order.

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

Two more trumpets must follow – more woes coming upon humanity.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

Sixth Trumpet:

As the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, John heard a voice coming from the golden altar that stood before God – this is the altar of incense seen in an earlier chapter.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

The voice commanded an angel to go and release the four angels who were bound by the Euphrates River. This is in the Babylonian region (in modern-day Iraq). From this region came all of the pagan and idolatrous religions known to man. It should be noted that these are fallen angels, for no angel of God is ever bound.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

The loosing of the angels and the ensuing judgement is for a very specific time in future history. It cannot come before God's set time. If we add the number who will be killed by these four evil angels to the one-fourth slain during the fourth seal judgement (Revelation 6:8), we arrive at half the population of the world.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

The four angels (maybe centaur-like beings) of death bring with them 200 million others to slay a third of mankind. This will happen exactly five months after the sixth woe begins. The numbers are very precise.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

The apostle John does not describe a human army, but rather an angelic one. Expositors of this text have sometimes attempted to symbolise the army and infer that it will come from China. Nothing about this interpretation is justified, especially since everything mentioned appears to be anything but human or animal. The horses they rode were like earthly horses, except they had lion-like heads, and smoke, fire and brimstone came from their mouths.

The riders wore breastplates that appeared to be on fire; represented by the colour of jacinth and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

A third of the world population will be destroyed by the smoke, fire and brimstone. Verse 20 states that these things are actually plagues.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

The horses had power to kill with their mouths, but they also had multi-headed, snake-like tails. We should understand that fallen angels can take on any form they desire, such as aliens, UFOs, ghosts, and animals, so these horses may simply be appearances of such entities. Whatever they are, they will supernaturally wound millions of people.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

With all these terrible things happening we would think that mankind would come to repentance, but amazingly, they will not. Instead they further harden their hearts against God. This reminds us of how the Pharaoh hardened his heart against God in the days of Moses (Exodus 7:22; 9:7).

Exodus 7:22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

Exodus 9:7 And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

They persist in worshipping idols. The devils they worship have indeed come down amongst them. This also speaks of the dramatic increase in demonology in the last days. This may indicate that, as the torment ebbs away at the end of the thirteen months, people will again return to their old ways of humanism, and pagan religions. They will have learned nothing from their experience, but will actually congratulate themselves on their ability to survive.

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

They will not repent, having lost all sense of right and wrong, they will continue to murder, use hallucinating drugs (sorceries, Greek *pharmakeia*), engage in sexual perversion (refers to all promiscuity whether it be adultery, homosexuality or lesbianism), and theft. The very things that are prevalent in society today.

Revelation 10

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

This is another parenthetical vision concerning the events which will take place in the spiritual realm, between the sixth and seventh trumpets, towards the middle of the Tribulation period. John sees a “mighty angel”. This angel is described as being clothed with a cloud (symbolic of God’s glory), wearing a rainbow-like crown (the rainbow is usually a sign of God’s covenant with man), his face shone as bright as the sun, and his feet were ablaze like columns of fire. Some have suggested, because of this description, that this “mighty angel” must be Christ, since His face shone like the sun and His feet were like bronze according to Revelation 1:15-16.

Revelation 1:15-16 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

This is unlikely for the following reasons. John had seen Jesus in various visionary forms and had walked with Him during His earthly ministry, therefore it does not seem possible that he would describe the Saviour as a “mighty angel”; added to this is the fact that no New Testament verse speak of Him as an angel. We should leave the text as it is – the “mighty angel” is simply one of the highest orders of God’s angels. This means that the “mighty angel” is a powerful angel who reflects the glory of God, otherwise we fall into the same trap as the Jehovah’s Witnesses have regarding Michael being Jesus. Daniel saw exactly the same angel in his vision (Daniel 10:5-8; 12:7).

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

In this angel's hand is a little scroll opened. This scroll possibly contains the record of the coming judgements on the earth during the last years of world history. It is also possible that the book, or scroll, is the title deed of the earth. The angel is seen placing a foot on the land and on the sea. Commentators, eager to see the angel as Jesus Christ, suggest that this is a sign claiming total dominion. Instead, given the details of this chapter, it is a sign of the completeness of God's judgement on earth. The angel is merely God's representative sent to challenge Satan.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

The angel lets out a loud shout which sounded like the roaring of a lion to the apostle John. Along with the shout came the sound of seven thunders. This thunder should be accepted as being the voices of other angelic beings in Heaven.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

John instantly interpreted these voices. He thought that he was supposed to write down what was said, but was commanded not to do so. This is very similar to Daniel being forbidden to write what he heard and saw (Daniel 12:4,9).

Daniel 12:4,9 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. [9] And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

This part of the Revelation is God's secret, but there is obviously an appointed time for its fulfilment (Revelation 22:10; Daniel 8:26-27).

Revelation 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Daniel 8:26-27 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

We cannot surmise what it is all about – only God knows these things – "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

The mighty angel lifts up his hand as though he was about to make an important proclamation.

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

He spoke in the name of the only true God (not any 'god' as in Pantheism, but in name of Almighty God, the Creator). He declared that all things were about to come to an end, that there is no further delay in pouring out God's final judgement. The words 'time no longer' here means 'without delay' rather than the cessation of time itself, since there is still the 1,000 year reign of Christ to come. The seventh trumpet judgement must now be unleashed upon the world, for there is nothing to hinder it now that mankind has throughly rejected God. Soon the Lord would answer the disciple's question about the timing of the establishment of Christ's Earthly Kingdom (Matthew 24:3; Acts 1:6-7).

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Acts 1:6-7 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

It would be the seventh angel who would actually make the announcement regarding the world's final hours. This would be the fulfilment of all the Biblical prophecies regarding the last days events. It is also a looking forward to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom or as the text states, "the mystery of God", when Christ will take ownership of the whole earth.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

John is told to take the scroll from the mighty angel's hand. This is a visionary enactment rather than a physical event, though obviously just as real to John.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

John asks the angel to give him the scroll. This was to be eaten. This is symbolic of meditating and thinking on the Word of God, but in this case especially the events of the last days. Jeremiah

used a similar expression regarding the Word of God (Jeremiah 15:16).

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

The scroll was sweet to the taste, but after digesting it, John found it turned sour in his stomach. The messages contained in the Book of Revelation (including Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel) have much joy, glory, peace and comfort for the reader, but they also contain descriptions of the most horrendous times in world history. Is this the reason so few study Revelation today?

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

The apostle John would prophesy – speak of these very things – to many people. Through his writings he would reach down into the final hours of time and preach the truth. We must take the teachings of Revelation to this world, for the torch of responsibility is now ours. We too are commissioned to prophesy, not new things, but those revealed in this book. We are living in the only time in history when all the signs and prophesies are converging, therefore we must warn both the church and the world before it is too late.

Revelation 11

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

John was given a measuring stick by the angel (compare Ezekiel 40:3,5).

Ezekiel 40:3,5 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. [5] And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

He was commanded to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who were worshipping there. Because of this description we know that it is the earthly temple in Jerusalem that is being referred to. This means that a new temple must be built by the end of the first 3½ years of the tribulation period. The measuring of it might indicate God's disapproval of and subsequent judgement upon it. The worshippers are Jews who believe that they are serving God. During this time the 144,000 will still be preaching the everlasting Gospel, which is Christ and Him Crucified.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

"The court of the gentiles", otherwise known as "the outer court", is were Gentiles were permitted to enter. This again reveals the earthly location of the temple, for there is no such distinction in Heaven. It seems that God will not honour the presence of those who oppressed the Jews, therefore they are not counted. For 3½ years the non-Jewish nations will control or rule Jerusalem (Daniel 12:7).

Daniel 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

This may be an indication that Jerusalem will be totally given to the Jews shortly after the Rapture of the Church. With this Temple in place, it must mean that the Muslim Dome of the Rock must be removed or destroyed, which in turn infers that Islam must be rendered powerless.

The Antichrist and his forces will be readying themselves to take the Temple and install his image, thus defiling the Holy Place (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Matthew 24:20-22).

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This act of sacrilege will cause the Jews to realise their error in accepting him as messiah, so they will flee into the wilderness (Petra).

Matthew 24:20-22 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

This verse introduces us to the Two Witnesses. These men will prophesy during the first 3½ years of the tribulation period. It is

significant that there are two witnesses, for they will confirm God's Word, Gospel and Judgements (Deuteronomy 17:6).

Deuteronomy 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

Most commentators believe that these men are Elijah and Moses. Both Elijah and Moses appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus; when they passed from this earth in the Old Testament their bodies were never found by those who searched for them (2 Kings 2:11-12; Deuteronomy 34:4-6; Jude :9).

2 Kings 2:11-12 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

Deuteronomy 34:4-6 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

Jude :9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

It is highly likely and appropriate that they should be God's Two Witnesses in the last days, for they are considered to be the most influential figures of Judaism. Elijah must return before the Millennial Kingdom is set up (Malachi 4:5).

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Please note that John the Baptist was not Elijah (how could he be?), instead his ministry of being the preparer of the way was only in the same spirit as Elijah (Luke 1:17; Matthew 17:11-12).

Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Matthew 17:11-12 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Others believe that they are Elijah and Enoch since both went to Heaven without dying. It is of significance that it was Moses and Elijah that conversed with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Whoever they really are, they will travel throughout Jerusalem (and possibly the land of Israel) preaching and dressed in sackcloth like the stereotypical prophet. The Jews will obviously be rejoicing now they have their temple, but the two witnesses will mourn over Jerusalem because they see her true spiritual condition. The Jews are in position to be ruled by the Antichrist, whose reign does not truly begin until the Two Witnesses are slain by him.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

These men are God's preachers and prophets. They are ministers of light in a spiritually darkened generation. They are His voice in a world that has become totally bankrupt of righteousness and morality. The symbolism is derived from Zechariah chapters 3 and 4. These two men will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to shine as

lamps during the Tribulation. Some commentators believe that the two men in shining apparel at the tomb (Luke 24:4).

Luke 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

The two men in white at the ascension (Acts 1:10) are the same two faithful witnesses described in this chapter.

Acts 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

For 3½ years no one will be able to cause these two men any harm. Those trying to do so, or even hinder their preaching, will be instantly destroyed. They will have the power to speak words that mean death for those who oppose them. This is what the “fire” possibly refers to. Their ministry is unstoppable, until God says so.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

During the 3½ years of their ministry they will have the power to stop the rain, just as Elijah did (see 1 Kings 17; James 5:17).

James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

They turn the drinking water into a blood-like substance, just as Moses did (Exodus 7-11). According to Revelation 7:1 there will be no wind during some of this period, so no water will be brought inland to fall as rain.

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

They will also have the authority to bring infectious diseases upon the earth, as Moses did. These are God's judgements that will cause some to "learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

Isaiah 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Their earthly ministry will end with their deaths. The Antichrist, under the permissive will of God, will kill them. The Beast will think that he has gained the victory over his two enemies who have tormented him over the last 3½ years. He is called 'The Beast' to indicate that he is the same person mentioned in Daniel 7:7 six centuries before.

Daniel 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

The word "finished" here is exactly the same as in John 19:30 where Jesus cried, "It is finished". Jesus died in Jerusalem when He completed the work of Redemption. The two witnesses will die in Jerusalem when they complete the work God has called them to.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

The bodies of the Two Witnesses will lie on the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days. This means that they will be on public display, and that the eyes of the entire world will be upon them.

Here the Lord describes the true spiritual condition of Jerusalem at that time. He nicknames the city Sodom and Egypt. This reveals just how few there will be who truly believe in God, since the majority will have totally abandoned the true God of Israel. Also, the mention of Egypt and Sodom may refer to their hardheartedness and the rampant sin of homosexuality. The Holy City is anything but holy! Remember that they think they have their Messiah, temple, city and land. They will think that they are under the blessing of God.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The Antichrist will leave the bodies on show for three and a half days as a sign of the utter contempt he has for the men. The dead bodies of the Two Witnesses will make international news, for the television cameras of all the nations will be focused on them. The Antichrist will no doubt portray himself as the hero who finally put an end to these two men, and state that he is obviously more powerful than God. They will lie in the streets for three and a half days, one day for each year the people rejected their ministry.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

These 3½ days will be a time of great celebration in Israel. Everyone will be rejoicing over the death of the two prophets,

especially since they do not have to endure their preaching of gloom and doom. These days will be an international holiday. People will be really humanitarian as they give gifts to each other! It should be noted that this is the only mention of joy on earth during the Tribulation.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Then … during their celebrations the unthinkable happens! The Two Witnesses suddenly stand upon their feet. People are totally stupid to believe that any man, devil or fallen angel can outmanoeuvre the God of Heaven. The "Spirit of Life" is the animating power of the Holy Spirit rather than merely "the breath of life" as in some versions of the Scriptures. The world will be in a state of absolute shock.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

As the television cameras of the world focus upon them, they rise (Raptured) into Heaven. This should be a tremendous sign to the Jews – for their true Messiah ascended also over two thousand years previously. They will ascend into a cloud of glory. We can certainly imagine the fear that this causes throughout the world. With the Rapture of the Church, it was as quick as a blink of an eye (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

But here it appears to be a slow catching up similar to Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:9).

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

God always calls His own to Himself.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Immediately after the Two Witnesses disappear from view, a massive earthquake will rock Jerusalem so that a 10th of the city is destroyed, and 7,000 people die. This causes fear, and some, a remnant (a few), glorify the true God. They realise that the Bible has been true all along. This does not infer that they will become believers, because evidently they will not, instead they simply acknowledge that God is greater than the forces ruling the earth at that time. Nevertheless, it is possible, even at this late stage, that some will turn to the Lord rather than follow the Antichrist. It is certain that millions will survive the seven year period and will be invited by Christ into His Millennial Kingdom (Matthew 25:31-46).

Matthew 25:31-46 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee

drink? [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The rest of the judgements of God will come upon the earth almost immediately. This will begin at the sounding of the 7th trumpet. People will think it can't get any worse, but they will be wrong.

Seventh Trumpet:

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

The seventh trumpet blast will mark the beginning of the second half of the Tribulation period and should be compared with Daniel 9:26-27.

Daniel 9:26-27 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall

come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

It brings with it the seven Vial Judgements which are ready to be released during the final three and half years.

The great (loud) voices are probably the whole of Heaven in unison giving glory to God. They see that the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth is not far away, which will take place after the seventh trumpet. Until that point, since the fall of man, the world has been controlled by Satan and demons (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

John 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Soon the Lord Jesus Christ will take back what is rightfully His when He sets up the promised Messianic Kingdom (Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-18, 22, 27; Luke 1:31-33).

Isaiah 2:2-3 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and

let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Daniel 7:13-18, 22, 27 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. [22] Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. [27] And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Luke 1:31-33 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

When they hear the proclamation of the Kingdom, the twenty four elders prostrate themselves before the Throne in worship and

adoration. This stands in stark contrast to the godless rebellion taking place on Earth.

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

They worship the Sovereign, Omnipotent, Eternal God, the Creator of all things, and to whom all things belong (Psalm 90:2).

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Soon the rule of Satan and the Antichrist will be put to an end. Notice that this text is given in the past tense to show the certainty of Christ's Reign.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Psalm 2 is a perfect commentary on the opening phrase of this verse.

Psalm 2 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt

break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

This anger was inspired by demons to get the world further away from the Truth. It is certain that we live in a very angry world today, so what is it going to be like during the Tribulation? The world has enough opportunities to repent, but few did so. Now all that is left is for God's wrath to be poured out (Romans 2:5,8).

Romans 2:5,8 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; [8] But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

God's first commandment to man was to "have dominion over the earth" and to "subdue" it (Genesis 1:26-28), but instead, under the leadership of Satanic forces, Man has chosen to destroy it by violence and greed. Because of this, judgement awaits all who destroy God's wonderful creation.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The Ark was symbolic of God's presence on earth in the Tabernacle and Temple. It was the emblem of the Atonement, of mercy and grace. From 2 Chronicles 35:3 we have no further mention of the Ark.

2 Chronicles 35:3 And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not

be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel.

Some say is was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar or the Babylonians when the vessels of the Temple were carried away (2 Chronicles 36:18-19).

2 Chronicles 36:18-19 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

Others think that Jeremiah may have hidden it in a cave. "Jeremiah came and found a cave-dwelling, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense; then he sealed up the entrance" (2 Maccabees 2:5). The one in Heaven is the real Ark, for the one built by Moses was only a replica (Hebrews 9:24).

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Some believe that the Ark was transported to Heaven in the days of Jeremiah, but this, though an intriguing notion, is not supported by Scripture.

The mention of the Ark at this stage reveals that it is about to fulfil its purpose within the covenant with Israel. The Jews will come to Christ as a nation and take full possession of the Promised Land during the Millennium.

The lightenings, thunders, earthquake and hail must be on earth, for no such damage can occur in Heaven. John has seen the glory of Heaven, and then he witnesses the destruction of the earth.

Revelation 12

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

John saw a great sign or symbol in the sky. It was in the form of a woman who was clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. It is interesting that the Roman Catholic Church believes that Mary is going to appear to mankind in this way in the last days. But this vision is not of the Virgin Mary, nor, because of the twelve stars, is it the emblem of the E.U., even though both are portrayed in a similar fashion. Instead this is a picture or symbol of Israel. Remember that Joseph also spoke of the sun, moon, and stars in relation to Israel (Genesis 37:9).

Genesis 37:9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes, and the woman Israel. The moon likely relates to God's covenant with Israel (1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:13).

1 Chronicles 23:31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD.

2 Chronicles 2:4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.

2 Chronicles 8:13 Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Israel (the land represented by the woman) is seen to be with labour pains, ready to deliver her child. What child? Some say it is Jesus Christ, but this does not fit the prophecy, and why would Revelation need to speak of the incarnation of Christ anyway? The woman is the Nation of Israel. The modern State of Israel came into existence in 1948 shortly after the Jewish Holocaust of World War II. Nevertheless, she has not come to the place where she completely owns the land. There are still constant wars in Israel. The birth pains will continue until the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. The “Child” is probably, as it is the most Scriptural and reasonable interpretation, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Next John sees a Red Dragon. This beast has seven crowned heads and ten horns (see Daniel 7:7-8 and Revelation 13:1).

Daniel 7:7-8 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Here is the point: There will be two major players in the last days, and both cannot exist together. First there is Israel, represented by the woman, secondly there is the last days world power under Antichrist (possibly the E.U.) represented by the Dragon. The E.U. (which used to be known as the E.E.C., The Common Market, and E.C.) was originally known as The Treaty of Rome, and was founded upon ten member states. Only two major players existed at the first coming of Christ, Israel and the Roman Empire. The European Union is simply the Revised Roman Empire.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Satan is the supreme power behind the Dragon and his system. It should be noted that Satan is also known as The Dragon (Revelation 20:2).

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

The stars in this verse refer to the angels that fell with Lucifer and so were cast out of Heaven with him. They were cast out because of their rebellion. This verse also indicates that they will be the cause of further rebellion on earth in the last days. Satan will send his angels to earth to create greater opposition and rebellion in the hearts of men towards God before the end. The Devil and his earthly system will be quick off the mark to destroy the Nation of Israel before the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. If he can wipe out the Jews, then what Kingdom will Christ have to reign over when He comes? This is why the world's focus has been on Israel since World War II. Satan failed with Hitler, but he will try again with the

Antichrist. The Devil has sought to destroy everything God has created or planned since the Garden of Eden.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

The Woman brought forth a male child. Again, some commentators, especially those influenced by Roman Catholic doctrine, suggest that this child is Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary. As stated above the child appears to symbolise the 144,000 males listed in Revelation 7. These will have their own Rapture before the Antichrist begins to seek the destruction of Jerusalem at the close of the Tribulation period.

The fact that the "man child" will "rule all nations with a rod of iron" does not specifically mean that he has to be Christ, for we read in Revelation 2:26-27, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father". The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world … Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"

It is interesting to note that the phrase "rod of iron is used three times in Revelation: on the first two occasions it is connected to governing the nations, but in Revelation 19:15 it deals with Jesus smiting the nations in wrath, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God". Believers will rule the Millennial nations with Christ, but only He can smite those who will not submit to Him. The word "rule" has to do with shepherding (Gk. *poimanei*); Jesus both rules (shepherds) the nations, and smites them – to strike them down (Gk. *pataxē*). "Thou shalt break

them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).

In both Testaments we find believers who will reign with Christ (Daniel 7:18, 27; Ezekiel 34:24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5; Matthew 19:28; Romans 8:17; Revelation 1:5-6; 2:26-27).

Daniel 7:18, 27 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. [27] And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Ezekiel 34:24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

Ezekiel 37:24-25 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him , that we may be also glorified together.

Revelation 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The 144,000 will indeed reign with Christ also (Revelation 7:1-8; 12:5; 14:1-5; Psalm 149:6-9).

Revelation 7:1-8 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 14:1-5 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn

that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Psalm 149:6-9 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

Note: This text can be problematic for those who believe that the "man child" is Jesus Christ, but notice how as soon as he is born, he is caught up to Heaven, and how that this passage is prophetic in context rather than historical.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

If the "man child" is Jesus, as some teach, we should find an account of Israel fleeing into the wilderness shortly after His ascension. The fact that such commentators jump ahead 2,000 years reveals that the theory is suspect. Israel will have to flee for her life during the last 3½ years of the seven-year period. This is what the prophet Jeremiah calls "Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). The Antichrist will turn against the Jews. They will finally realise that he is not the Messiah he claims to be. He will seek to destroy the Jews because they will not receive him as their God and because he will set up his own image in the Temple … "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Jews

will flee into the wilderness, which most commentators believe to be Petra. This persecution will be levelled against Gentiles who have recently come to Christ also. It is very likely that this 'wilderness experience' will bring about the salvation of the Jews … "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:25-26).

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

A great war will be fought over Israel. This war will take place in the heavenlies. On earth the worst of all holocausts will be determined for the Jews by the Antichrist. But this evil plan will be thwarted by Israel's Guardian Angel, Michael the Archangel. Three important truths are revealed here:

a) God has ordained that His angels are to watch over and protect His people … "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:11). "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). We are not permitted to seek the presence of angels as so many are doing today.

b) There are various orders of both good and evil angels. It must be pointed out that the Bible only knows about one archangel, and that is Michael.

c) It is the archangel Michael who protects and defends the people and land of Israel … "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book"

(Daniel 12:1). Satan, right from the very beginning, has sought to destroy God's people (both Jews and Christians), but this final assault will be the most wicked of his schemes (see Revelation 12:12).

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

The outcome of this battle is already recorded in Scripture. The Devil knows what the outcome will be and what is going to happen to him. Satan and the fallen angels will be defeated and cast down. Cast down from where? Cast down to where?

a) Cast down from where? The Heaven of God's habitation? This cannot be true. It is better to see this statement as referring to the heaven immediately above our heads. Remember that the apostle Paul calls Satan "The prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Satan's present domain is the heavenly realm rather than Heaven itself. Satan was cast out of Heaven before the beginning of time.

b) Cast down to where? The Earth. It should be very clear that this passage cannot be referring to his original fall, because he was not cast down to the earth at that time. Instead he took up his abode in "high places" (Ephesians 2:2, 6:12). The term high places literally means "heavenly places". Again, he is the prince of the power of the air. The word "air" here means the atmospheric region." It must be noted that he has never been to Hell yet.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Here the Devil is titled The Great Dragon … that Old Serpent. Jesus called him the father of lies (John 8:44).

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

It is he who tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God (Genesis 3:1).

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Satan and the fallen angels will come to deceive the world on a grand scale (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

This activity has a twofold purpose.

a) He will make his last ditched attempt to overthrow everything and everyone that belongs to God. He will seek to introduce as much sin and deception as possible so as to force God to judge the world. He knows that the holy and righteous Lord must punish iniquity. This is why Satan attacks the believer first.

b) He is trying to get back at God for casting him out of Heaven. He cannot remove God from His Throne, but he will do all that he can to stop His children getting to Heaven.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast

down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Even in this darkest of moments in future world history praise is heard in Heaven. Here we have two facts about the victory and salvation won by the Lord Jesus Christ.

a) Satan's time is quickly coming to an end because Jesus is about to set up His Millennial Kingdom. That Kingdom will spell defeat for the Devil's dominion over the earth. These final 3½ years will find Satan in a frenzy because he knows his time is limited.

b) Satan will never be able to accuse or overcome God's people again.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Satan and his angels, and even the Antichrist, will be overcome by three valuable and powerful weapons.

a) The Blood of Christ. How few fully trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary! Satan hates what the Blood of the Lamb has and can accomplish. We can defeat his lies and tricks with what he hates the most – living in full assurance of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ.

b) The word of testimony. Proclaiming and confessing the word of God everywhere and at all times. Satan wants us to be ashamed of the glorious Gospel and that we are followers of Christ.

c) Loyalty to Christ even in the face of death. Are our lives so important that we would risk losing eternity for them? God grants true believers the strength to stand firm even when being martyred for the faith.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The world is given a warning – Satan will be cast down to the earth.

He will use this opportunity to wreck and destroy through:

a) The Antichrist system.

b) The direct involvement of evil spirits.

He has a short time to accomplish his worst act of rebellion against God.

We must remember though, that he knows he is fighting a losing battle, so he is determined to take as many human beings to Hell with him.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

He will seek to destroy the Jews (worldwide?). This will be on a grander scale than Hitler's Final Solution. Maybe the Antichrist will have concentration camps set up beforehand for the extermination of the Jews (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:).

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Will the world be shocked? No, we have become used to seeing refugee camps on our television screens.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The woman is given the wings of an eagle. Some have suggested that this represents America airlifting the Jews to safety. This may or may not be so, but it is best to compare Scripture with Scripture here. Can this not simply mean that God Himself will make a way for the Jews? At the time of the Exodus He declared, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Exodus 19:4). God did not "fly" the Jews away from Pharaoh's wrath, but they were under His protective care. Does He need America to do this for Him? The two wings speak of God's protective care and delivering power (Matthew 24:16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:21).

Matthew 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.

Luke 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

The prophecy of Zechariah deals with this time, and he states that only one third of Jews will survive the Tribulation (Zechariah 13:8).

Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

These will be preserved during the final three and half years (Daniel 7:25; 12:7).

Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Daniel 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

The flood here represents a great tribulation (Jacob's trouble). The idea is a sudden onslaught of wickedness against Israel. The Lord promised, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). The devil can do his worst but he cannot destroy the Jews. If he could, then God will have failed. The "flood" may be the forces of Antichrist trying to stop the Jews fleeing, just like Pharaoh did.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

The flood [a great army] will be swallowed up by the earth. This may mean one of two things, or a combination of both.

a) A natural catastrophe may cause the Antichrist to turn back from pursuing fleeing Israel. We must remember that the earth is undergoing the wrath of God at this time, so this natural event may be a result of that.

b) It could be a war or rebellion that causes him to turn away. "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over" (Daniel 11:40).

Whatever it is, God will make sure that the Antichrist will not lay even a finger on the Jews seeking a place of safety in the wilderness. Where do they flee to? Where is this wilderness? Daniel 11:41 reveals the answer, "He [the Antichrist] shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." Edom, Moab and Ammon will not be under the control of the Antichrist. It is to one of these regions that Israel will find refuge. Many commentators believe that the site will be Petra which so happens to be in Edom (part of modern-day Jordan).

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The devil, now really angry because he could not get to the Jews, turns on those who did not go in this final exodus. We can only speculate why this remnant chose to stay behind. It is possible that these are the Jews who never returned to Israel. This attack could also be levelled at those who did not take the Mark of the Beast and have pledged their allegiance to Christ. These people will face extreme persecution, but they can still be overcomers (:11).

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 13

This chapter reveals the coming of two world rulers. The Beast is the political leader, while the False Prophet is the religious leader. A combined One World Government and One World Church is an appealing idea to many in the world today. The Beast (political leader) is known as the Antichrist, though Revelation does not actually give him that title. We know that he is the Antichrist because he sets himself up to be worshipped. The False Prophet will declare him to be the Messiah and God. He will be Satan's man – the embodiment of evil.

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

The "sea" in its literal sense can only mean the Mediterranean Sea, but symbolically it is referring to "the sea of peoples". By linking the two thoughts together it is logical and reasonable to believe that the Beast comes out of one of the nations that make up the Mediterranean region. Some commentators suggest that the Antichrist will be a Syrian with Jewish descent.

The First Beast – the political leader – will rise up from humanity. Daniel describes him as "the prince" (Daniel 9:26).

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

John describes the Antichrist as the Beast thirty-two times in Revelation to indicate his wild and diabolical nature, but he is a man rather than another description of the Dragon. Some have stated that he will be a demonic spirit in a fleshly body. He in fact will be born like anyone else, but it has been suggested that

cloning may have something to do with this. A cloned human cannot have a spirit given by God! The apostle Paul calls him "the son of perdition" and "the man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

He rises up out of "the sea". The "sea" is symbolic of humanity, especially the Gentile nations (see Revelation 17:15; Isaiah 17:12; 57:20-21).

Revelation 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Isaiah 17:12 Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

Isaiah 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

He will offer hope to a world at war and in political and religious disarray.

He is described as having seven heads and ten horns. Scripture interprets itself, so we know that the seven heads are actually seven hills (Revelation 17:9; Daniel 7:16-24).

Revelation 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Daniel 7:16-24 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

In the Mediterranean world this can only refer to Rome. What we call the European Community (now the European Union) was originally named The Treaty of Rome. The E.C. was founded in Rome, therefore it is the Antichrist's system. The Ten Horns are actually the Ten Kings of Revelation 17:12.

Revelation 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

This describes a confederation of ten nations – exactly what the E.C. originally was. It is said that world empires build upon the previous empires they conquer; for reason the seven heads may refer to the seven world empires that dominated Israel throughout its history, rather than the seven heads being a reference to the seven hills of Rome. These empires are: Sumeria, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. A mountain can also symbolise an empire (Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45).

Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the

wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. [44-45] And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Each empire's religion was very similar, just the names of the gods changed, since they were all based on the same pagan foundation. Roman Catholicism's religious system is as thoroughly heathen as the rest.

We must recognise though that the Beast is the central figure – he wears all the crowns of authority! These nations have pledged their allegiance to him. This man will claim to be the God of all gods, thus he will wear the crowns of all religions other than Biblical Christianity, referred to as the "name of blasphemy" or as in other versions, "blasphemous names". Note what Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God".

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

John portrays the Beast as looking like a leopard, having feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion. This imagery is very similar to that used in Daniel 7. The leopard represents Alexander the Great, who

was as swift and cunning as a leopard. The bear represents Medo-Persia, for it was strong and fierce in battle (Isaiah 13:17-18).

Isaiah 13:17-18 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

The lion represents Babylon.

Jeremiah 4:6-7 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction. The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

What we are seeing here is a combination of three of the world's most terrifying empires – Medo-Persian, Babylonian, and Greek. An in-depth study of Daniel will advance our understanding of these symbols. The Antichrist Empire will have the traits of the other three, but the Beast's power comes directly from Satan. So here we see the demonic trinity; Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet. He gets a "seat" – this is the place of total authority – a dictatorship. History is full of evidence of the evil resulting from one man gaining ultimate control over a nation. It is possible that this man will be fully possessed by Satan.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

This verse teaches us that he will have a deadly wound that has miraculously been healed. This wound should have killed him. There are three possibilities here in interpreting the meaning of this verse:-

a) It describes the revival of the Roman Empire, and that the spirit of ancient Rome is still alive and well within the European Union.

b) Some have suggested that the Antichrist will be a reincarnation of a previous world ruler of ancient times since he comes from the bottomless pit. This is highly unlikely and unwarranted in Scripture, nevertheless it could be the same demonic spirit that possessed them.

c) The wound is actual evidence of an assassination attempt. The world thinks he is dead, but instead he is resurrected (just like Jesus).

A revised Roman Empire is the most likely fulfilment of this prophecy, for the original empire was indeed destroyed. It has been revived and revised as the EU in the modern era. That said, since the beast is a person, we have to be open to a false miracle being performed to win over the masses (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him , whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

Whichever way it works out, the world will worship him. Something about him draws the adoration of the masses. They would never venerate another Hitler, would they? Hold that thought!

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

He becomes the star of the nations. Everyone loves him. Who will dare speak out against such a wonderful man? Notice just how corrupt humanity will have become, for in Exodus 15:11 it was, "Who is like the LORD?", but now, "Who is like the beast?" This has always been Satan's ambition (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:9).

Isaiah 14:12-17 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

Ezekiel 28:11-19 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among

the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Matthew 4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

It will be at this point that the central government will be set up with the Beast as its elected president (emperor). In adoring the Antichrist mankind will be actually worshipping Satan. So, we see, that the final one world church will be Satanic rather than Christian or Jewish. All the multi-faith talk is leading society one way, directly into the arms of Satan. Mankind will get the government it deserves.

The Antichrist will gain power through several means, including:

a) He will be able to gain power because mankind will have given themselves over to Satan and wickedness. This means that there will be an increase in witchcraft as we approach the return of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul speaks of such a time as this in 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

b) He will gain power through his ability and appeal. He will be an extremely loveable and charismatic figure. Through insight and genius he will attract the loyalty of the masses, and as a great orator, he will win people over to his cause.

c) He will gain power through military and economic strength. The beginning of his rulership will be a time of peace and safety, but he

will gradually turn up the pressure. He will control the world's greatest military machine, so it will be a peace maintained by force. Like all dictators, he will control the economy also.

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

d) The Antichrist will have utter contempt for Jesus Christ, and no doubt this will appeal to the godless masses who hate Him with a passion, too. He will have no qualms about setting up his own image in the temple (Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Daniel 11:31; 12:11).

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:).

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Daniel 11:31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Daniel 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Being a charismatic leader, he will promise to solve all the world's problems (war, economical, social), if only people submit to him. Through such means he will easily and quickly become a dictator. He will gain power, but only for 3½ years, that is, the second part of the Tribulation period; therefore his reign is extremely short. We must remember that he does not have his own power, but is under the authority of Satan himself.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

e) He will gain power through atheism and humanism. He will reject everything of God whilst promoting himself to be the only God. By building his headquarters in Jerusalem he seeks to offend the Lord God Almighty as much as possible. All religions will accept him as their spiritual leader (see Daniel 11:36).

Daniel 11:36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Notice who and what the Antichrist will stand against and blaspheme. God's name: he will focus on totally discrediting the God of the Bible through outright offensive language, mockery and political means. The *Tabernacle*: this may refer to Heaven itself or the Temple. The inhabitants of Heaven includes angels and believers.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

f) He will gain power through religious persecution. The world hates Biblical Christianity, so guess where his first line of attack will be! The world will not raise its voice, especially now that he is seeking to destroy post-Rapture Christianity. He will also turn upon Judaism (as we saw in the previous chapter). Daniel prophesied that the Antichrist will speak blasphemous words against God, and that he will seek to "wear out" believers on earth (Daniel 7:25).

Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change

times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

g) Though he is building a Europe-wide empire, he will endeavour to control the entire planet. This may include forcing other nations to submit to his authority by threatening war. Globalisation is a constant theme of many governments today, so the way is being paved for it to become a reality.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Everyone who submits to the Antichrist can never be part of God's Kingdom. Once the pledge of allegiance has been made, there is no going back. Such people will doom their souls to a lost eternity. Even in the Tribulation years, those being saved must come through the Blood of Christ, otherwise their names can never be entered into the Book of Life. This means that there is no possibility of repentance for anyone who takes the Mark of the Beast.

"Slain before the foundation of the world" does not mean that certain people (the elect) had their names entered into "the Lamb's book of life" in eternity past. Instead, it was the pre-creation plan of God for Jesus to come to earth to save mankind, that is, all who would, through freewill, believe. It is the salvation plan that is pre-ordained rather than individuals, for God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

It is time for the church of our day to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. The book of Revelation is purposely ignored by the majority of the church world today, but those who are willing to hear will read and understand it. The phrase is similar to that used in Revelation 2 and 3, but notice that "churches" is omitted due to the fact that the church has been Raptured before the Tribulation.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

It is up to us as individuals how we respond to the message of Revelation. We go into spiritual bondage by personal choice. We can damn our souls simply because we choose to disobey God. Those who have true faith will endure and stand firm in Christ until the end (see Matthew 10:22). The last sentence of this verse can be viewed as a call for believers to stand firm during such terrible days (see 1 Peter 2:19-24; Romans 12:19).

1 Peter 2:19-24 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it , if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

Here we have the prophecy concerning the second beast and his area of activity upon the earth. The word “another” (Greek: *allos*) literally means “another of the same kind”. Though most Bible commentators focus upon the Antichrist (the first beast), it is important to note that he needs the second beast. In this final

section of Revelation 13 we will come to understand who he is and what he will do.

He comes from the “earth”. This probably means that he will come from the common people and that he will not be a politician, though he will be elected to high office under the Antichrist. The masses will accept him because he will be “a down to earth”, gentle type of person, as suggested by the term “lamb”. He will be a man of humility and meekness, but behind his sugar-coated words is all the power of Satan, and he will eventually drop the mask to reveal his true character. He will appear to be a man of God, but in fact he will be devoted to the devil. Some commentators believe that he will be of Jewish descent, but there is no Biblical support for this. Jesus warned us to be careful of wolves dressed in sheepskin coats! – “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Matthew 7:15). This false prophet will spread the doctrines of Satan (1 Timothy 4:1).

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

This second beast will be a religious leader, however he will not be promoting the truth, instead he will be the Antichrist’s PR man, so he too will be a gifted orator. He will motivate people to accept the first beast as their saviour. We know that he will be a religious leader because he is called a “false prophet” wherever he is mentioned (Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

Revelation 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that

worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

His Satanically given ministry involves directing mankind to worship the Antichrist. He will represent the Antichrist on the religious level, and like him, he will be a very charismatic figure. In this we must see that religion and politics must be united in the Antichrist's Empire. This will evolve into a Europe-wide single religion.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Because he has the power of Satan he will be able to perform impressive miracles (or at least appear to do so, since the next verse reveals that it is deception). Calling down fire from the sky will certainly convince many that he is from God (2 Timothy 3:8).

2 Timothy 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

He will work by counterfeiting the power of God (the devil has been highly successful in this area). In a word, it is all 'deception'. The word "deceiveth" indicates 'slight of hand' to mislead people. The goal is universal worship of the Antichrist. It will then be suggested that a statue of the Antichrist be built as an aid to worship. Amongst all the denominations within Christendom, the Catholic Church alone has had no problem with idolatry. Some believe that this "image" will be an holographic representation, which could be true considering the next verse. This, whatever form it takes, will be placed in the new temple in Jerusalem. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)". (Matthew 24:15).

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

With the help of modern technology he will cause the image to speak. Statues (idols) do not have the ability to communicate by themselves, so therefore there must be some technology used to make the image to do this (Psalm 135:15-16).

Psalm 135:15-16 The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.

We have three options here:

a) It will contain pre-recorded speeches by the Antichrist.

b) It will be live audio-visual broadcasting from the Antichrist's headquarters.

c) It will be the direct voice of Satan (which is the least likely).

It seems that this image helps bind this multi-faith religion together, and that it is vital if the Antichrist is to secure total devotion. There will be those who know the truth and will not accept this deception. Through this image the Antichrist will be able to pronounce the death sentence upon them. We should read a Europe-wide persecution of Christians and Jews into this.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

How will the "image" know that the person is not a devotee of the Beast? Probably, by the same modern technology; it will be able to scan for the "Mark" through NFC (Near Field Communication) that is already a feature of modern smartphones. Everyone who submits to the Antichrist system will receive an identification mark in their right hand or in their foreheads. This "mark" will be similar to "barcode" but based upon personal DNA. It is highly unlikely that it will take the form of a tattoo since it is placed "in" the hand and forehead, that is, implanted – a silicon chip implant. Those who take this mark will have irreversibly damned their souls for all eternity (Revelation 14:9-11).

Revelation 14:9-11 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

This implant contains everything about the person, and those who refuse to take it will be deemed to be traitors. Where a person lives, how much they have in the bank, and a record of every aspect of life will be encoded on this implant. Credit cards are not the Mark of the Beast, but the next step in the process must be the implanted version. The Antichrist system will control every person's finances, but it also proves that they must be contained within a Europe-based Centralised Bank, which also means that one country within Europe will hold the purse-strings of all. The majority will take the mark because they will have no other way of putting food upon their tables and sustaining life. We are already on our way to a cashless society, and as technology is advancing so fast, we can see it being fully implemented during the Tribulation, just as the Bible clearly states.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Here is wisdom. Who is the Beast? Many have come up with names of historical characters whose names added up to 666. It is no use trying to figure it out in English, Latin or Hebrew, since Revelation was written in Greek. The Greek language will reveal who this man is. This part of Revelation will not be unfolded until the time God has planned for it, therefore nobody before the Rapture of the Church can possibly take the Mark of the Beast. One man will have 666 (Six Hundred and Sixty-Six not three sixes or three times six [18]). It is that person's DNA / Identification code. Many Bible Commentators teach that 6 is the number of man who has fallen short of perfection (7), therefore 666 explains that the Antichrist is a fallen man. Revelation does not offer us three individual sixes, rather it is a single mathematical figure – Six hundred, three score and six. The Mark of the Beast, as stated above, cannot be received until the Antichrist appears – this is the main reason no one today can work out the meaning of 666.

Revelation 14

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Here we have a preview of what is going to take place regarding the 144,000 when Christ returns. The vision simply details future events as though they had taken place beforehand. This chapter should be viewed as another parenthetical insight that transports the reader forward to the close of the Tribulation.

In verse 1 we see the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion with the Lord Jesus Christ (the Lamb), yet in verse 3 we find them before the Throne of God in Heaven. Something must have happened between these two events. To avoid mentioning another 'rapture' some commentators suggest that this Mount Zion is in Heaven rather than on earth, but this does not tell us how they arrived in Heaven. It is better to take Mount Zion as literal, the very place where the Temple was built.

The 144,000 here are the same as those mentioned in Revelation 7, thus they are exactly the same group that had a teaching and preaching ministry throughout the Tribulation. This may sound obvious, but there are Bible teachers who state that the 144,000 is different from the one mentioned in Revelation 7, and that this is not a literal figure, instead it must be seen as symbolic of all the redeemed. Such an interpretation as this amounts to the same scripture twisting notions of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The 144,000 will be taken up to Heaven towards the end of the second 3½ years, therefore they are still alive at the Second Coming, since they have been under God's protection (Revelation 7:3-4).

Revelation 7:3-4 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their

foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

The thunderous voice here may be the mighty voice of Christ (Revelation 1:5). Notice that there are two distinct voices heard by John here. Is this when the 144,000 are caught up into Heaven? If so, it seems that they receive a Heavenly fanfare as they enter God's presence, not with the blast of trumpets, but with the soothing music of harps. "Harpers harping with their harps" has a special ring to it, doesn't it?

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

The 144,000 have a special song. As they appear before the Lord God, they will sing a song only they can sing. It must be a song of praise and victory for the wonderful ministry they had received on earth. Why did not the apostle John record the lyrics of this song for us? Well, only the 144,000 are permitted to sing it, and we know that some bright spark would set them to music if they were written, thus making void God's word. The word "learn" may imply that they are taught the song by someone in Heaven.

"Redeemed from the earth" here must refer to the 'rapture' of the 144,000, otherwise only that number of saved people will be in Heaven – exactly as the Jehovah's Witness cult believes. To avoid this conclusion many commentators say that the number 144,000 is only symbolic and should not be taken literally. How foolish of them to twist God's word to fit their teachings!

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

We must remember that the 144,000 are unmarried male Jews. They are the first of the end days Jews to reach Heaven's shores.

They would have preached the Gospel to Israel throughout the Antichrist years. The description of them in verses 4-5 reveals that they are the purest of the Jewish Christians living in the final hours of this present world system. There may be a suggestion here that they will remain the Lord Jesus' special attendants throughout the Millennium and all eternity.

They are certainly committed and loyal to the Lord. They are termed "the firstfruits", this simply means that they are the first Jews to be saved during the beginning of the Tribulation years. They are the first of "all Israel" to "be saved" (Romans 11:26; Zechariah 12:10).

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son , and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

They remained faithful to Christ throughout the terrible events on earth in the Last Days. They will not lie, cheat, deceive or compromise to stay alive. During the Tribulation years they remain

faultless. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (Zephaniah 3:13). How many of us can go even a single day without some kind of guile and compromise? This proves that they have been especially set apart unto God – sanctified for His purpose. This is another reason why they are called "firstfruits". The firstfruit offerings in the Old Testament had to be perfect, pure, and without any blemish. Thus are the 144,000.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

This angel can only preach after the Church and the 144,000 have been raptured, and he must of course preach the true Gospel. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). The Church of Christ is now responsible for spreading the message of salvation. After the Church is raptured the 144,000 will tell others about Christ.

While there are those who remain unsaved, and have not taken the mark of the beast, the eternal gospel must be preached – "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). The New Testament era began with angels announcing the Good News, and it seems that it will end the same way. Not about a baby born in a manger, but that the King is coming!

There are some who believe that John's vision was actually symbolic of a satellite beaming back to earth the message of Christ, but it is better to allow the Scripture to speak for itself, therefore this is a literal angel. The main point here is that nothing can hinder the true gospel of Jesus Christ from being preached. The angel will travel around the earth. Everyone will see and hear

him. This could not be true if it were a manmade broadcasting system. His message has a two-fold application for those on the earth at that time: 1) It will be an invitation to the unmarked to turn to Christ before it is too late; 2) It will reveal that it is too late for those who have received that mark.

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

There are two parts to the angel's message. Firstly, there is a call to fear God. Few people then or now fear God. Even though terrible things will be taking place, most of the people will be cursing God. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18, Psalm 36:1).

Just like Pharaoh the majority harden their hearts in the midst of judgement. We try preaching love to win the lost, but they do not listen. Nor do they respond when we tell them of coming judgement. There is nothing wrong with the message, it is simply that they have hardened their hearts towards God. Secondly, there is a call to give glory to God. This must include the need for true repentance. Anyone who does glorify God must be stating that God is right. To glorify Him means that they must bow their knee and accept Him as Lord. Those who do repent realise that God's judgement has come, and that the end of all things is at hand. To glorify God is to worship Him. But look how the angel prompts the unsaved to worship God. They must praise Him as the Creator. The God who created this world is the true Master. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Psalm 95:6). The angel points man back to Genesis. No wonder the devil hates both Genesis and Revelation. He deceives people into believing that the first did not happen, and that the last will never happen. This is why corrupt religious leaders see both Genesis and Revelation as fairy tales.

The angel's message must also include the idea that God is about to bring all He created to an end. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:10-12). These will be the main points of the angel's sermon. It is left for people living at that time to make a choice to accept Christ or go on to damnation. The angel preaches a "Heaven or Hell?" message. Nevertheless, we, too, must decide to follow Christ or not.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The Lord Jesus Christ must triumph over all godless societies. He must be victorious over all corrupt religions (this means all who are not part of the Born Again Bible Believing Church). His wrath is going to be poured out upon Babylon. She is going to fall. This is the first time that Babylon is mentioned in Revelation, and it probably refers to literal Babylon in the Middle East rather than mystical Babylon in Rome. Revelation 13, in a sense, did suggest its existence, and it will be discussed in detail in chapters 16 to 18.

In this verse we find a prophetic statement regarding her imminent destruction. We must remember that the Antichrist's political headquarters will be in Iraq, and that his religious capital will be in Rome. "And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (Isaiah 21:9). Babylon, though a literal place, is also symbolic of everything that is anti-God. Sometime in the future the city is going to be rebuilt and will be Antichrist's political, economic and religious

centre. As we will see in a later chapter, he will, it seems, destroy Rome and move the religious side of things to Babylon.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand.

Here we see those who are doomed to Hell and the Lake of Fire. These people will experience the full weight of God's wrath. We must understand that they have chosen to worship the Beast, and, in doing so, reject God. They have chosen to pledge their undying allegiance to the Antichrist, thus they have sold their souls to Satan. This verse also reveals that the state will control religion in the last days. It is of interest to note that it is religion rather than politics that unites people together at the end.

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

The damnation of the lost is eternal in nature. The doctrine of annihilation is false. In reality it is a false hope spread by those who do not believe a God of love can send anyone to Hell. If God did not send the unrepentant to Hell then Christ's sacrifice (which is eternal proof of His love) would be undermined forever. The damned are those who reject the Lamb of God as the only way of salvation. There is nothing more God can do for them except send them to Hell. The mention of "fire and brimstone" is significant. God is reminding us that all who refused the way of escape in Sodom and Gomorrha perished.

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Hell and the Lake of Fire will exist throughout eternity (Matthew 25:46; Romans 2:3-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). This means that the torment of the lost will last just as long. There will never be a single moment of relief from the torment. No light at the end of the tunnel. No hope of release from a so-called, and fictitious, purgatory. Note: God's love, coming through His only begotten Son, can only be applied to sinners on this side of eternity.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

This, because of the prophetic setting, is primarily spoken to the Tribulation saints, though there is an obvious lesson here for us all to learn. Only the true saint of God will enter into the everlasting Kingdom. When we compare Revelation 13:9-10 and 14:12-13 we see that the call for "patience" is placed in the gloom narratives to inspire hope and offer comfort during persecution.

Revelation 13:9-10 If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Revelation 14:12-13 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

All true saints endure to the end … "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). They do not compromise. True saints keep the word of God … "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:22). Obedience is proof that a Christian truly loves God. True saints maintain their faith in Christ. This means that they believe and promote the fundamental

doctrines of Christ. Only true saints escape the coming judgement … "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). Even so, there are very few of them on the road to eternal life … "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

This passage reveals who gets to Heaven and what their reward will be. As believers we know that we will pass from this earth to enter into our heavenly reward.

The question we must ask here is, who are the dead who die in the Lord? It has to refer to those who truly lived for Christ through the Tribulation, and that they followed Him with all of their heart and soul. In life and death Jesus Christ was their Lord.

True believers live, die, and arise in Christ. It is important to lay stress on that little word "in". Those who enter Heaven must first be "in" Christ on the earth. Those in Christ have the image and identity of Christ in this life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (1 Corinthians 5:17). When the day of our death comes we will have no fear. For if we were in Him in life, we will be in Him in death. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Those who are in Christ are the only ones who can be truly blessed.

This brings us to the rewards of those who enter Heaven. It is obvious from the text that those who live in Christ labour for Him on earth. They preached, witnessed, taught, and guided others to Christ. Only labourers for Christ can enter the Rest of Christ. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). They are Christ's faithful ones who laboured day and night in His service. The apostle Paul reminds those who are still alive, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). This heavenly rest does not mean we are going to float around on fluffy clouds doing nothing for eternity, but it refers to the fact we will be in the glory of God – the place of real rest … "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

"Their works follow them" means that God will never forget their service for Him on earth. This being so, their reward must be eternal. What is your personal reward in Heaven? Only God knows the answer to that, but a few Scriptures might help us understand and prepare … "But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven" (Matthew 6:20)…. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (1 Corinthians 3:12-14) … "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Whatever rewards, joys and blessings we experience in Heaven is only a result of being "in" Christ on earth. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7).

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Verses 14-16 reveal the Great Harvester of souls. He will reap the few remaining stalks of wheat from the great mass of tares. Only

Jesus has been given the authority to do this (Matthew 13:41; John 5:27).

Matthew 13:41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.

John 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Here He is given the title of "the Son of Man", which indicates that He is the Messiah, the Perfect Man, and the representative of mankind, coming on clouds of glory. His first advent brought Him to the world as the Saviour of sinners, but He will soon return to gather together those whom He has saved through His blood. The majority of mankind reject the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter, is the only means of salvation. When Christ returns they will realise that what Scripture says of Him is absolute truth.

The white cloud should not be seen as literal as it represents the Lord's perfect holiness, purity and glory. He is seen wearing a golden crown. This symbolises that He is King, Lord, and Eternal Governor. He is coming to take His rightful place in the world. The God of Heaven will establish His Kingdom upon the earth after the Antichrist kingdom is destroyed – this is also known as Christ's Millennial Reign.

In His hand is a sharp sickle. This will be used to harvest the "wheat" from the earth … "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matthew 13:30).

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

The “Temple” is likely to be the one in Jerusalem (see verse 17), for the angel has probably investigated the abomination in the holy place and announces it is time for judgement to fall. Both here and in the parables we find that there has to be a separation of the saints from the unsaved, see Matthew 25:32.

Matthew 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

Notice that the harvest has to be “ripe” – Paul described this as happening when “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Romans 11:25). Though an angel announces this Rapture, it is Christ Himself who will gather the saved together at His coming.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Verse 16 reveals that there is a preordained time for this to take place. The saints of God will be free from sorrow, pain, persecution, and all the evils of the present world. They will be in the presence of their Lord. This harvesting is a gathering together, a removal from the earth, into the shelter of Heaven … “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable” (Luke 3:17).

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

A angel comes out of the Heavenly Temple holding a sharp sickle. The mention of the “Heavenly Temple” here reveals that the Temple of verse 15 must indeed be earthly. Unlike the one that the Lord uses to harvest His saints, this sickle will be used to bring the wrath of God upon the ungodly. This sickle is symbolic of the Battle of Armageddon. The angel comes from the very presence of God with orders to pass sentence upon the earth.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

A second angel appears from the altar of incense with the command to strike the earth with the sickle (Joel 3:13; Revelation 19:15).

Joel 3:13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Revelation 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

We see here that it is all according to God's perfect timing. Armageddon cannot come until the preordained time, and it is certain that true believers will not be around to see it. This wrath is a result of the world rejecting God and His word. They have done this by persecuting and ridiculing the Church of God – Biblical Christianity.

Notice again the word "ripe". When the full measure of sinfulness appears, that is when the unleashing of the final part of God's wrath comes. Notice too that they are called "grapes". We see here that there are two vines in the world; One is Christ, and the believers are the grapes (see John 15:5).

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The other is Satan (and Antichrist), the ungodly being the fruit of that vine. Each person chooses which vine he wants to be connected to. When each is fully ripe the sickle must be put in ….

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29).

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Now the angel plunges in his sickle. The vine of the earth, the ungodly grapes are harvested. These are not gathered into God's barn but immediately go into the winepress of His wrath. It is at this point that the world's worst nightmare is realised. The picture is one of merciless judgement. It will be His perfect justice on a Christ-rejecting world … "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18) … "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

This judgement takes place on earth outside the city of Jerusalem in the valley of Armageddon. The prophets Isaiah and Joel graphically describe this event (see Psalm 110:5-6; Isaiah 34:6; 63:1-4; Joel 3:9-17).

Psalm 110:5-6 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

Isaiah 34:6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Isaiah 63:1-4 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

Joel 3:9-17 Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

Combined with this passage we understand that it is a picture of armed forces gathering together to destroy Jerusalem.

As soon as the Antichrist's army assembles in the valley in preparation for advancing on the City, Christ intervenes and destroys them … "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the

Lord will consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). It is at this time that the Antichrist and the false prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire (see Revelation 19:13-21).

Revelation 19:13-21 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Satan is then bound in the Bottomless Pit for a thousand years.

These are the events that will take place just prior to the Lord setting up His Millennial Reign on earth. Therefore, we see that He cannot allow Jerusalem to be destroyed. If Satan could destroy Jerusalem, Jesus could not reign!

Revelation 15

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

This is the heavenly preparation for the seven bowl judgements upon the earth. These last seven judgements come at the end of the “wrath of God” period, which is just prior to the Millennial Reign of Christ. These events are described as being “great and marvellous”, that is, awesome and amazing, since they are the final part of God’s wrath upon the Antichrist and those who follow him.

The seven angels each have a bowl filled to the brim with God’s righteous anger against the rebellion of mankind. These last judgements bring to completion the wrath of God. They will be poured out in rapid succession, almost like a crescendo, and each one worse than the previous one. Notice that they are the “last” of the judgements, therefore they are not the same as, or a restating of, the previous seal and trumpet judgements.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Here is revealed the viewpoint of Heaven regarding God’s judgement of the world. On the sea of glass (see Revelation 4:6; Exodus 24:10) stand multitudes of martyrs who died during the Antichrist years.

Revelation 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

Exodus 24:10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

This holocaust deserves the full weight of the wrath of God.

They might have died under Antichrist's hand, but they are the ones who are victorious in the end. Why? Because they did not conform, compromise, or submit to the Beast. The words "gotten victory over the beast" can be translated as "had conquered the beast" (compare Revelation 12:11).

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

These have something special to praise God for. God kept them throughout those terrible years, and He gave them strength to endure even to the death. In the face of death they were strong in the faith.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

They had a two-fold song of praise to sing. The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses (read Exodus 15:1-19) worships God for giving deliverance from Pharaoh and the crossing of the Red Sea.

These saints are now free from the last tyrant of this world. The song of the Lamb is the victory song that only those who are washed in His precious blood can sing. There may be an indication here that these martyred saints come from both the Jewish and Gentile lines. Note that the Lamb is called "God Almighty", thus affirming His deity.

It is a song of victory because they are the crowned ones … "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12). They praise God for being the Almighty King of the saints. The saints mentioned here are likely to be all believers from before the Flood, all Jews who had faith, the Church, and those from the Great Tribulation. We must remember that God is always true and just in everything that He does. The saved will see very clearly that nothing less than full judgement fits the crimes against God.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

In the midst of so many religions, with their so-called gods, the true believer has found the only true God. He alone deserves worship, praise and adoration (Exodus 15:11).

Exodus 15:11 Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Only He is holy (Luke 1:35).

Luke 1:35 Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

This verse directs our attention to the Millennial Reign of Christ on the earth. All the nations, with their kings, prime ministers and presidents will have to bow the knee to Christ. During the 1,000 year reign of the Lord, all will worship Him as the true God. The "all" here can only refer to those who have not submitted to the Antichrist, yet have survived the seven year tribulation / wrath. We must remember that there are a huge number of Jews living under God's protection in Petra until this time. There will also be nations who never came under the beast's government (European Union), possibly America, Australia, New Zealand and others.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

John sees the door of the Heavenly Temple being opened. This indicates that even until this time the door of salvation is still open. Notice the text says “the temple of the tabernacle”, meaning the Holy of Holies – the very presence of God. Both salvation and judgement come from the same source. In the Holy of Holies was the Mercy Seat, therefore there is no more mercy available to the world.

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Seven angels come from His presence with the final part of God’s wrath. The white garments represent absolute holiness, and the golden sash reveals divine authority to punish the world. Coming from the Holy of Holies, they may be dressed in priestly robes (see Leviticus 16:4).

Leviticus 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

In their hands are the seven last plagues.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

One of the four cherubim (Revelation 4:6) gave each angel a bowl to place the plagues in.

Revelation 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

The word “vial” can mean any container like a bowl, censer or urn. Each angel’s bowl is filled with the fulness of the merciless wrath of God. It all depends on which bowl we have drunk from in our lives. The cup of salvation or the cup of judgement … “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD” (Psalm 116:13) or “For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them” (Psalm 75:8).

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

The “smoke” [shekinah glory] is representative of God’s presence (Exodus 19:18; 40:34; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 6:4).

Exodus 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Exodus 40:34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

2 Chronicles 5:13-14 It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the

LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

1 Kings 8:10-11 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

Isaiah 6:4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

No one can enter into the presence of God while His wrath is being outpoured on the earth. This means that no one else can get saved. We see here that the wrath of God means that His grace and mercy are withdrawn. No day since Creation has the entire human race experienced God's wrath on this level, for even during the Flood eight souls were mercifully saved, but here no such mercy is shown.

Why is this happening? Simply because the world rejected Jesus Christ as Lord … "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). It is too late now to plead for salvation – it is over – the way in is blocked. There is no getting passed God's wrath … "Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through" (Lamentations 3:43-44).

Revelation 16

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

A great voice, a mighty and loud voice, commanded that the seven vial judgements be poured out upon the earth. The seven vials (bowls) are all part of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15).

Revelation 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

These judgements bring intense misery upon humanity. They are poured out at the very end of the Wrath of God period of the Last Days. Each bowl is full of the fullness of God's anger. Each of the angels are called to ready themselves for the duty they have been commissioned for.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

The First Bowl:

As a result of pouring out the first portion of God's wrath, all those who had received the Mark of the Beast, or worshipped the image, will receive ulcerous boils (sores) on their bodies. These will obviously be extremely painful. It may be better to see this as a terrible skin cancer. Remember that such sores came upon the Egyptians (Exodus 9:8-11).

Exodus 9:8-11 And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall

become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

Some commentators suggest that these sores are the result of germ warfare or radiation, but that is highly unlikely since even those who did not receive the Mark would be affected. It seems obvious that it is a direct judgement from God upon those who give themselves over to the Antichrist, and are therefore destined for Hell (Revelation 14:9-11).

Revelation 14:9-11 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.

The Second Bowl:

The sea becomes like the coagulated blood of a corpse. The “sea” here is probably the Mediterranean Sea rather than all the seas and oceans on earth, though some see a worldwide contamination of water. Everything in this Red Death dies, and food supplies are depleted as a result. Some oceans have already experienced what

scientists term the Red Tide, but it is caused by man's misuse of nature, rather than God's wrath. Notice that every sea creature dies because of this toxic poison. This is similar to, but more aggressive than, the judgement upon Egypt when God turned the Nile into blood (Exodus 7:17-21).

Exodus 7:17-21 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord : behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

The Third Bowl:

Fresh Water Contaminated. Some Bible commentators see this as a continuation of the previous judgement, but it is much wiser to accept it as another self-contained outpouring of God's wrath. The mention of rivers and fountains refers to drinking water. It too is contaminated so that it looks like blood (Exodus 7:24; Psalm 78:44).

Exodus 7:24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river.

Psalm 78:44 And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

Again, it is best to keep this in context with the Beast's kingdom. If every drop of drinking water on earth became like blood all life would be extinguished in three days. People can survive without food much longer than they can without water.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

The angel that was responsible for delivering this part of God's wrath declares that God is completely justified in doing this. God never acts unrighteously in anything that He does (Psalm 18:25; 98:9).

Psalm 18:25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

Psalm 98:9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Regardless of the severity of these last judgements, God is absolutely just in pouring them out.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

Why will this judgement fall? Because the Beast and his empire is guilty of the very worst of atrocities against God's people, both Jew and Christian. They are worthy of such judgement, for they thirsted for blood, so now they must drink it (Isaiah 49:26).

Isaiah 49:26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet

wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

It seems that this contaminated water will have to be drunk, for there is nothing else, nevertheless, no chemical treatment or water purification will take away the bitter and nauseating effects.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

The cry from the altar, from the martyred saints of God, affirm that the Lord is truly righteous (Revelation 6:9-10).

Revelation 6:9-10 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Man only ever receives the punishment he deserves. Their wait for justice is now over. God is always just and true (Revelation 15:3; 19:2).

Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Revelation 19:2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

The Fourth Bowl:

The Scorching Sun. This refers to an increase in heat and radiation (Isaiah 24:6; 42:25; Malachi 4:1).

Isaiah 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Isaiah 42:25 Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

The sun will burn hotter than it has ever done in the whole of history, perhaps, as Isaiah 30:26 suggests, seven times hotter.

Isaiah 30:26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

It is possible that in this judgement the earth's ozone layer is compromised so much that harmful rays from the sun come through. This great heat must affect the ice caps, and once they have melted, the sea level rises and submerges coastal regions and islands. God has reserved these ice fields for this reason (Job 38:22-23; Amos 9:5-6; Psalm 147:17-18).

Job 38:22-23 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

Amos 9:5-6 And the Lord God of hosts is he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath

founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.

Psalm 147:17-18 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

No doubt millions will die of heat exhaustion and thirst. The Earth was created by God as man's perfect home, but now it is anything but habitable; it will be more like Hell on Earth.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Do they repent? No, instead they continue to curse God (Psalm 95:8; Ephesians 4:18).

Psalm 95:8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

Ephesians 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

Here we see the stubbornness and stupidity of mankind. They will harden their hearts just as Pharaoh did.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

The Fifth Bowl:

The Antichrist System judged. The seat (throne) of the Beast is his headquarters or capital, which, in keeping with the Word of God, must be a rebuilt Babylon. It is interesting that this bowl Judgement specifically limits the intense darkness to the seat of the Beast

rather than the whole world. Everyone involved in the Beast's government, and those who honour him, will be plunged into thick darkness. This darkness will be so terrifying that they will bite their tongues with fear, but still they will continue to blaspheme and curse God.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

Do they repent? No, they continue to stubbornly reject Him. We see that man's heart has not changed in the thousands of years since the ten plagues upon Egypt. We think that fearful events will cause people to get right with God, but they rarely do. Sadly, they are under the control of Satan himself (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

The Sixth Bowl:

The River Euphrates is over 1,000 miles long. Much of the water that feeds the river comes from the ice cap on Mount Ararat. It will be interesting to see if Noah's Ark will be finally revealed as a witness to the worldwide Flood.

The River dries up to prepare for the Battle of Armageddon. A great army from the east will ready for battle, made up of the armies of the nations to the east of Israel, meaning the Arab states, and possibly China. The Euphrates separates Israel from Asia, therefore it's drying up will make it easier for the great army to cross into the Holy Land (Isaiah 11:15).

Isaiah 11:16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

Satan will know that Israel is on the verge of increasing its borders, as promised in Genesis 15:18, all the way to the Euphrates.

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

The Antichrist armies must try to stop this.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet will be in control of this vast army. The frogs symbolise the demonic spirits that will possess the army. Maybe the infernal trio will realise that this vast human army is not sufficient to do battle against Christ, so it needs to be augmented with demonic entities. Their human hosts will be mindless soldiers fighting a mindless battle. Frogs are considered to be unclean creatures (read Leviticus 11:9-21, 41). The term "unclean spirits" or "evil spirits" (Greek: *pneumata akatharta)*appears 21 times in the New Testament and always refers to demonic possession. Frogs catch their prey with their tongues, so these lying entities will deceive mankind with "lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

These evil spirits will deceive humanity into believing that they can defeat the Lord God Almighty as He returns to earth. This gathering of a huge army is the plan of Satan, but in reality God had preordained it to happen (Joel 3:2, 14; Zechariah 14:2).

Joel 3:2, 14 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. [14] Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

Zechariah 14:2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

These demonic spirits will perform amazing miracles (signs) to deceive people into doing their will. This seems to convince the kings (leaders) that they are on the right side despite the pain and thirst. Added to this is the idea that they can wipe out the Jews once and for all. They are all being tricked into fighting Almighty God at Armageddon, but in fact they are entering His winepress (Revelation 14:19).

Revelation 14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Who is this Lord God Almighty? Jesus said that He would come as a thief in the night. From the human perspective there seems no hope for Israel as the mighty army stands ready to invade, but then Christ will appear with His armies (Revelation 19:11).

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

It is He whom the false trinity and the armies will fight against. He is our Lord God Almighty. In this verse we have an exhortation to all who live in the Last Days … Be watchful, ready, and remain pure and undefiled. This is a word of encouragement to the surviving believers in that day. Those who compromise with the Antichrist will lose their souls. Spiritually naked people do not enter the Kingdom of God.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

The setting for the Great Battle is Armageddon – Megiddo in Palestine. This place is usually called a valley, but in fact the word Armageddon means “Mount of Megiddo”. The valley closest to Mount Megiddo is called Jezreel. Once the vast army assembles, both the mount and the valley will be too small, therefore it will extend into the Jordan Valley and the valley of Jehoshaphat, then into Idumea and Bozrah.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

The Seventh Bowl:

The Air. As this bowl was emptied upon the earth, a voice declared “It is Finished!” This is it, the final act of God’s wrath before Christ’s Millennial Kingdom is set up. The voice must belong to God since no one was permitted to enter the temple until the wrath was complete (Revelation 15:8).

Revelation 15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

So it is correct that He should announce the end of the judgements. This Judgement is actually the final destruction of both Babylons: religious (Revelation 17) and political (Revelation 18).

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

It seems that all of nature erupts with lightening, thunder, and earthquakes. These are so severe that the like has never been seen on earth before.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Jerusalem will be divided into three parts by an earthquake, that is, almost completely destroyed. This may be what Zechariah 14:4,8 is referring to (see also Isaiah 24:17-21; Joel 3:16; Haggai 2:6-7).

Zechariah 14:4,8 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. [8] And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

Isaiah 24:17,21 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. [21] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

Joel 3:16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Haggai 2:6-7 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

Cities all around the world will crumble and fall. Babylon is especially dealt with by God (Revelation 14:8-10).

Revelation 14:8-10 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

This means that the Antichrist's headquarters, and other major cities around the world, will be utterly destroyed. He will have no power-base or empire.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Islands will disappear below the seas and oceans. Mountains will be levelled. This obviously refers to a worldwide shift of the earth's tectonic plates. The earthquake of the sixth Seal Judgement moved mountains and islands out of their places, but this one levels mountains and submerges islands. Is it possible that the

Lord will restore the Earth to its pre-flood formation as He prepares for the Millennial Kingdom? (See Isaiah 40:4-5).

Isaiah 40:4-5 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Hailstones a hundred pound in weight will fall upon mankind, resulting in great damage and injury. These stones are not made of ice though, for the Greek word is *lithinos,* which is actually rock. Lithium is used in the batteries of many devices today, and is known to be highly reactive and flammable. It is a light rock, but remember that even a hundred tonne bale of feathers can make a pancake out of a person if it fell on him or her. Maybe these are the feet that trample the grapes in the wine vat (Revelation 14:20).

Revelation 14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

What will be left standing after the great earthquake and gigantic hail? Will people repent? No, they continue to rebel and curse God.

Revelation 17

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Here we find a description God's judgement upon religious Babylon as opposed to political Babylon: verses 1 to 7 describe religious Babylon, and verses 8 to 18 is the interpretation. With this in mind, we can clearly see that Revelation provides added information relating to the beginning of the Tribulation period before dealing with judgement upon Babylon. We should keep in mind that religious Babylon will only be the spiritual arm of the Antichrist system.

An angel gives John more information regarding the state of the Last Days World Church. Without pulling any punches, the false church is called "The Great Whore" by the angel. She has committed spiritual prostitution, by following Babylonian Mystery Religion rather than the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This religious system is none other than the Roman Catholic Church, who, without question started out as a true church of Christ, but corrupted herself by adopting paganism, idolatry and other abominable practices. It is likely that Roman Catholicism (if possible, in a more corrupt form) will become the state religion of the Antichrist system during the first days of the Tribulation.

The whore is said to sit upon many waters. This is descriptive of the fact that the system rules over multitudes of peoples and nations. This is expounded upon in verse 15.

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

The whore is supported and admired by international statesmen. She has convinced the leaders of nations that she is a force to be reckoned with. Many politicians honour her by seeking advice and guidance. Kings, Presidents and Prime Ministers continue to kowtow to the pope of Rome. Politics and religion have always used each other to advance their own causes. Today, it is true to say that, our world leaders are infatuated with Rome.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

In his vision, John is carried away into a wilderness to see this Great Whore. The book of Revelation is prophetic insight into events that will occur at the end of earth's history. John is transported forward in time to see these events unfold, but it may be true to say that he is taken back in time here to see the foundation of all paganism. The "wilderness" might be symbolic of the post-Flood area where Nimrod built Babel, the mother of all false religion – religion, we might add, that was created in opposition to the Truth. While Babel isn't Babylon, we do know that the region it was built in became the Assyrian/Babylonian Empire.

She sits upon a scarlet coloured beast having seven heads and ten horns, the same Beast mentioned in Revelation 13. As stated above, the Roman Catholic Church will become the official religion of the Beast system. She will ride upon its power and authority, and the beast will use her to take control of the hearts and minds of the people. Who doubts the fact that her church is full to the brim with false and heretical doctrines, blasphemies against scripture and Christ, except those who are drunk with love for her?

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

He sees her clothed in purple and scarlet (the colours of priestcraft) and bedecked with gold, silver, pearls and jewels. John is describing the wealth of this organisation that calls herself a church of God. Not only is the Catholic Church the wealthiest organisation in the world today (it is impossible to put a figure on her colossal riches), but she hoards it while millions are dying with hunger in some of the poorest countries she rules over.

Not only is she idolatrous and heretical, but she also holds aloft the most offensive cup. This cup is the Sacrifice of the Mass – the worst of all blasphemies. Why? Because her chalice degrades the once and for all sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. He said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), but she declares, "It's only just begun". It is an offence to Heaven to suggest that her priests can change wine into the actual blood of our Saviour [transubstantiation]. The cup of the Lord was meant to be a blessing, but Rome turned it into a poisonous chalice which damns souls.

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

As plain as day John sees the name written on her brazen forehead. Actually it is several titles which describe her true nature.

1. Mystery … Her foundation is paganism and other mystical religions of the ancient world instead of the Holy Scriptures.

2. Babylon the Great … All false religions have their roots in the Babylonian cults of the ancient world, and the Roman Catholic Church is no different. Anything from Babylon is automatically at variance with God. It all finds its origin at the Tower of Babel, when all the world wanted to be one. Once Rome is destroyed, the Antichrist will indeed relocate the religious side of his kingdom to restored Babylon in Iraq. It is situated very close to the geographical centre of the Earth, so is ideally situated to control politics, commerce and religion.

3. The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth … All who are a part of her, including all who sympathise with her, must accept her teachings and practices. She is the mother of all false churches and religions.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

She is seen with blood on her lips. We cannot ignore history on two very important levels. Firstly, Babylon has always been the enemy of truth and those who stand for it (Jeremiah 51:7; Isaiah 47:5).

Jeremiah 51:7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

Isaiah 47:5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

Pagan religion has sought to destroy the truth. This is seen throughout Scripture (both Testaments). Secondly, the Vatican is responsible for some of the worst atrocities this world has ever seen. A quick reading of Foxe's Book of Martyrs will reveal this. Yes, her priests, bishops, and popes have slaughtered millions of innocent Christian people since the third century.

Was John repulsed by this vision? Did these details cause him to be angry at this false church? No! You see, there is a certain beauty of Rome that attracts so many to her. They know what she has done and what she is capable of, but still there is that fatal attraction. Any rotten door can look good with a coat of brightly coloured paint. Why do multitudes of Bible believing Christians see nothing wrong with Rome? It is simple; they admire her. Only a Heaven-sent revelation can remedy this. John was amazed by

what he saw, yet this should not be taken as approval, for it certainly seems that he was bewildered by what he saw.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

John was both amazed and baffled by the vision, so the angel now opens his eyes to see the true nature of the woman on the beast.

False religion, especially Roman Catholicism, is based upon 'mysteries'. These mysteries are placed above the teachings of Scripture. This is the reason why they can commit such atrocities and still claim to be worshippers of God. The angel is about to describe this false last days religion in detail. Notice that she is in league with the Antichrist political system. Whenever State and Religion have joined hands, persecution of true believers has resulted.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

The power behind Roman Catholicism is Satan not the Lord Jesus Christ. The Beast (Antichrist) will be the earthly authority governing the Vatican. Some believe that the Vatican will control Europe. This is unlikely. Europe will go hand in hand with the church for a period, and will make her a State controlled religion. The world will be amazed at the sudden rise of Antichrist, and how quickly he unites the EU. and Catholicism together. It will appear like a miracle. Who will not wonder after the Political / Religious system? Finally, Roman Catholicism will have chosen evil incarnate as its head – this is what it has been gearing up to anyway.

The world, at this stage, will be focused upon the Antichrist. They will follow him wherever he leads, therefore, if he promotes religion, they will adhere to it also. Simply put, they will copy their hero.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Rome sits on seven hills, or maybe it doesn't! Actually there are more than seven hills in Rome and the Vatican only sits on one of them. Here the Antichrist's religious arm will initially have its headquarters, that is, in Rome. Its foundation was laid in the 3rd Century by Constantine: each brick has been laid down by successive popes, and the final capstone will be the Antichrist himself. She will rule as the religious authority over Europe. That said, the "seven mountains" also refers to seven kingdoms as mentioned in the following verses rather than seven literal hills. If taken as literal, then the hills can only refer to Rome.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Rome is also based on seven kingdoms. Five of these are ancient (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece). The one that "is" in John's day was Rome. The one yet to come is Europe (revised Roman Empire). Notice that the religious system of all these nations was 'mystery'. Rome has all the traits of the previous kingdoms.

The Antichrist kingdom will not last very long, for according to Scripture, it will last only for the 3½ years [42 months] of the second part of the Tribulation (Revelation 13:5).

Revelation 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

At first the Antichrist's Empire will be a continuation of the seven previous empires, but he will quickly establish his own. This is why he is called 'the eighth'. His kingdom will encapsulate all the characteristics of the previous empires, especially the Roman Empire, since it was the largest of them all. We are plainly told that he is doomed to perdition – the Lake of Fire.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

There are two possibilities here regarding Europe. (1) The ten original nations of the EU will have power with the Antichrist. (2) The European States will be reconstructed into ten regions with their own governing structures. The latter seems to be the most likely. When the members of the EU pass their power to the Antichrist, their supposed joint-power will be short lived. Europe is NOT united now, but will be for a time under the Beast. If the Antichrist reigns for 3½ years, we can see how quickly he will dominate the nations if they only have power with him for one hour.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

This verse describes the unity of the European Union. This means that there will be a centralised government in Europe. 'Power and strength' refers to the military, governmental and financial realms. The Beast will be the President of Europe, and national leaders will mindlessly cede their authority to him.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

It will be these nations that will determine to destroy Christ at His return at Armageddon. The military might of these nations will be mobilised against Him, but, the King of kings and Lord of lords is mightier than all their weaponry, for all He needs is the power of His word (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:16; 1 Timothy 6:15).

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Revelation 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

1 Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Once again Satan will presume that he can dethrone God (read Isaiah 14:13-16).

Isaiah 14:13-16 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms.

He who called the universe into existence can certainly deal with the armies of the Beast.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Notice that the whore is the spiritual power over a vast number of nations. What part of the world is free from her influence? Europe especially has been continually under her power.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Religious Babylon will be stripped by the Antichrist after he has no more use for it. Once united under the control of the Antichrist, Europe will have no need for the Papacy, for the Beast will become its spiritual head instead. Right up until the end Roman Catholicism will have a semblance of Christianity, which the Beast will hate. The wealth of Rome will be removed. Her authority will quickly come to an end. The Antichrist will simply use the Great Whore to his own ends. The Vatican State will be utterly destroyed. This destruction of religious Babylon will take place around the middle of the Tribulation, for the sole object of worship will be the Beast. If this is correct, then Islam and other world religions must fall too.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

It is God who inspires the Antichrist to destroy Rome! How much He must detest that evil system! It has continued to be in opposition to all the doctrines of Christ. The unification of Europe is to this end also. It all fulfils the prophecies laid out centuries before.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

The woman is the Great City. There is only one great city that has ruled over Europe – that is Rome. It has been Vatican State that has influenced countless millions since the fall of the Roman Empire. The angel leaves us with no alternative for identifying this Great Whore – Religious system.

Note: Some may object to Rome being identified as the main character described in this chapter. We could over-simplify this

part of Revelation, as several commentators do, and make it to be a unification of all false religion. We must keep in mind, though, that John knew nothing of Islam, Mormonism or other modern religions, but he was fully aware of the religion of Rome, the empire that ruled the world he lived in. It is very obvious that the Lord Himself identified Rome as the Great Whore, which includes the religious aspect too. The Roman Catholic Church became ‘The Holy Roman Empire’ and adopted many of the practices, titles and images of Imperial Rome. Even a brief study of the history of the Papacy will confirm this.

Revelation 18

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Here we have another angelic announcement. The angel has a very significant message. Notice that he comes with great power, and that the whole earth is illuminated with the light that emanates from the glory that surrounds him.

At the very moment the Antichrist is creating his vast army, God destroys his political headquarters in Babylon (compare Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 50:11-27, 40).

Isaiah 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jeremiah 50:11-27 Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls; Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD. Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land. Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his

bones. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord , the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve. Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the Lord , and do according to all that I have commanded thee. A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD. The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left. Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

His declaration announces the destruction of political Babylon – the Antichrist's government and power base (Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:8).

Isaiah 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

Jeremiah 51:8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.

Religious Babylon was destroyed at the end of the first 3½ years of the Tribulation, now it is the turn of political Babylon at the close of the second 3½ years.

Some commentators believe this to be the destruction of Rome, but, in light of combined prophecy, it is Babylon in Iraq that will be destroyed (Isaiah 13:19-22; 47:7-9; see Jeremiah 50-51).

Isaiah 13:19-22 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

Isaiah 47:7-9 And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am , and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

We can understand that Babylon is full of demons and fallen angels, since they will empower the human soldiers of the Antichrist, gathered at the Euphrates, to attack Israel and Christ on His return.

It has been suggested that the prophecies mentioned above have already been fulfilled, but there is a glaring error in this interpretation. Babylon, a city still in existence in John's day, and has never been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah; it has never been entirely devoid of human inhabitants, for Jews were living there at the time the Book of Revelation was written. Previous judgements on the city were not accompanied by terrestrial or celestial catastrophes, and it has never been submerged under the Euphrates. Therefore, Babylon must be rebuilt in the future, and, through Satan's power, become a wealthy hub for world (or at least European) financial institutions.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

By this time every nation will have been influenced by Babylon. We know this is certainly true of Europe's power today, and it will continue through Antichrist's Babylon in the future (see previous chapter). Once fallen, there will hardly be any nation that will not feel the effect of it. So many will be controlled by Babylon that world financial markets will collapse when God deals out His judgement.

The description of political Babylon is almost the same as that of religious Babylon found in Revelation 17:2-4.

Revelation 17:2-4 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

This is because the same evil spirits are in control of both, and once Rome is destroyed, they will move to Iraq where the first empire was established in rebellion against God.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Now is the time to come out from Babylon's influence. This is true for both religious and political Babylon. We cannot unite with the Great Whore, and neither should we become friends of the world. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17), "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

Whoever unites with Babylon will be judged along with her. Since this verse is dealing with the end of the Tribulation period, it is obvious that many will not have surrendered to the Beast, but instead turned to Christ, so they will need to be both spiritually and physically separated from Babylon. The prophets called for believers to leave Babylon before the judgement fell (Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51: 6-9, 45).

Jeremiah 50:8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

Jeremiah 51:6-8,45 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.

[45] My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

When Babylon is destroyed by God, the Antichrist will be elsewhere, and will be informed of its fall (Jeremiah 50:43; 51:31-32).

Jeremiah 50:43 The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail.

Jeremiah 51:31-32 One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.

Those who do separate from Babylon before the destruction comes will rush to Jerusalem to announce the good news (Jeremiah 51:10, 45, 50).

Jeremiah 51:10,45,50 The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. [45] My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD. [50] Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

The wickedness of Babylon has reached its highest level and cannot be ignored, so God must act against her. God remembers all of her sins. This includes everything from Nimrod's Babel to Antichrist's Babylon, both religious and secular.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

She will deserve the highest level of God's wrath. It will be thorough, this is what is meant by "double". Babylon will receive her just judgement for all the wickedness it has been guilty of.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

This has been true of all world empires. They think that they will continue forever. The Antichrist's empire will be no different. Hitler thought of a thousand year Reich, but the Beast will be aiming for an eternal Reich. Antichrist is the "king" and Babylon his "queen". This is what he will expend all his energy on – the glorification of his kingdom!

This description of Babylon is remarkably similar to that of Laodicea (Revelation 3:17).

Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Both enjoyed the luxury and glory of the world and both were proud and thought themselves superior. Though Laodicea had the opportunity to repent, Babylon cannot. It has reached the point of no return, especially since its inhabitants do not see any reason to repent or suffer any kind of judgement (Isaiah 47:1, 7-8).

Isaiah 47:1,7-8 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. [7-8] And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures,

that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am , and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Babylon's judgement will come suddenly, and it will be completed in a single day, therefore those who separate from her must indeed make haste. Political, economic and environmental disaster will send Antichrist's empire into a tailspin to destruction. His headquarters will be burned to the ground in an instant. He thought he could get away with defying and ridiculing God! Babylon thought of itself as mighty, but God is Almighty!

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

Leaders of all nations will look on in amazement as they watch the Antichrist System being reduced to ashes. This could only be true in the age of the television. Because the economy of the Beast kingdom will be located in Babylon, once it falls, their respective nations will financially collapse too. Because they ceded power to him, their own authority will crumble also.

The "smoke" here should not lead us to think that Babylon will be destroyed by humans means, such as nuclear weapons. God was and still is very capable of destroying cities and nations without the aid of modern weaponry.

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

There will be great weeping, not just for her but also for themselves. Remember, all the nations involved in the Beast's

kingdom will have invested everything into it, so they are judged along with him. “One hour” suggests the speed in which Babylon will fall. No one will have time to prepare for the consequences of its destruction. “Standing afar off” may allude to their observance of Babylon’s demolition through media broadcasting throughout the world.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

Never again will Babylon (religious or political) influence the world. Her years of glory are ended in a moment. The financial systems of the world will collapse, leaving governments and business in absolute devastation and ruin.

Revelation 13 revealed that no one will be able to buy and sell without the Mark of the Beast, but now the very system that implemented the Mark is unable to buy and sell any more.

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

This verse is symbolic of the vast wealth and treasures of Babylon. It reveals just how economically powerful she will be in the last days. Again, this is especially true today in Europe as it gears up for the Antichrist’s takeover and incorporation into his own European empire.

It seems that Antichrist’s version of a global commercial state has worked favourably for his empire. He controls metals, gems, clothing, furnishing, and food products (see :13). This probably means that Babylon will be his import and export centre, so once it is destroyed, international turmoil will be the obvious result.

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

This verse carries through with the same idea of the previous. The last statement should be noted. This is what it is all about. Not earth's riches or glory only, but the souls of men. Satan simply wants the souls of men. This is what his war with God has always been about. There is also the added thought of what is termed "modern day slavery" – the absolute control of someone else's life.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The glory of Babylon is over. All she hoped and dreamed for will never happen. Antichrist's eternal kingdom will be over in seven years (just like Hitler's thousand year Reich).

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

The world leaders will be stunned, so will weep and wail, that is, they will be mentally and emotionally devastated. We know that Christ's Kingdom is about to appear, but to them it is the end of the world. In a sense they will be right. Finally the world will be free from all Babylonish influences.

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls.

This verse has lead some commentators to say that the Antichrist is the pope of Rome and his kingdom will be ruled from the Vatican. But we see from our reading of these last few chapters that there is a political as well as religious Babylon. The Vatican exists until

the Beast takes it over. This is why the destruction of both arms of his kingdom appear very similar.

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.

Again, the fall of the financial markets is reiterated. Babylon's fall will affect every living soul on earth to some degree, but especially those involved in commerce. Transportation industries will instantly go into economic ruin.

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

The devastating effect of her fall is noted. It is obviously worldwide even though it is unlikely that Antichrist will rule the entire planet. For example Britain is not ruled by China or America, but we feel the pressure when their money markets goes through a tough time.

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Can we ignore the extent of God's judgement upon Antichrist and his empire? Several times in this chapter we see how it will affect the world.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Heaven will erupt in joy! All who have ever perished or were persecuted by Babylon throughout the ages will rejoice to see her final day. Do we not rejoice at the fall of evil empires? So too will Heaven (Jeremiah 51:48-49).

Jeremiah 51:48-49 Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD. As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

What happens to a rock thrown into the sea? It sinks. So it will be with Babylon. She will sink to rise no more. Babylon throughout the ages has been an offence to God, thus as the greatest offender of all, she deserves the judgement meted out to her (Matthew 18:6).

Matthew 18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.

Never again will she hear the sound of the raucous and sensual entertainment industry. The noise of the manufacturing industry is stilled. Now a deathly silence exists where there was once noise, music and merriment.

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

No light will shine in her streets, nor will the sound of joy ever again be heard. This may be a continuation of the fifth bowl (vial)

judgement, if so, Babylon has been in constant darkness (Revelation 16:10).

Revelation 16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

Maybe the only light source has been from candles, oil and torches since that time.

Nobody will ever be influenced by her wickedness again. The fact that the word “sorceries” (*pharmakeia)* is used seems to indicate that Babylon will have its own drug industry (both medical and recreational). If the word simply refers to occult practices, then it might hold the same meaning as Nahum 3:4, “Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts”.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Why? Why is Babylon judged so severely by God? Because she has always been the enemy of God. She has sought the souls of men, and those who instead submitted to God, she persecuted and killed. She is responsible for the blood of all who have been slain on the earth. This indicates that God is dealing with Babylon from Nimrod to Antichrist. It has been the same system throughout the ages. In fact her foundation was first laid when Cain, who religiously rebelled against God, slew Abel. It is from him that Nimrod came. So “all that were slain upon the earth” is no exaggeration.

Vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19-21).

Romans 12:19-21 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed

him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

False religion and godless governments have always sought to prohibit and destroy anyone who worships the true God of the Bible.

Revelation 19

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.

All of Heaven erupts in a glorious Hallelujah Chorus. Its inhabitants are rejoicing because Babylon (the Antichrist's kingdom) has finally gone. This was the last of the world empires. It is a song of salvation, glory, honour and power. Here they exalt the true Lord. Everyone in Heaven is anticipating the next great event – the earthly reign of Christ – Christ's Kingdom on earth.

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

The worship includes the fact that God has judged the world and revenged the blood of the martyrs (see Revelation 6:10).

Revelation 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

It is made very clear that God was justified for the judgement He has poured out upon both political and religious Babylon. She was responsible for all kinds of corruption on the earth, and was held accountable for the blood of the millions that she slew throughout the ages.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

Can we doubt the wickedness of the Great Whore when we hear the triumphant song of Heaven? This reprise is a result of ecstatic joy for Babylon's demise and Christ's exaltation (Revelation 17:16; 18:8-9,18).

Revelation 17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Revelation 18:8-9,18 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. [18] And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

“For ever and ever” here simply means that it is the permanent destruction of Babylon.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

The twenty-four elders and the four angelic beings around the Throne of God join in with this heavenly song. How often ‘Hallelujah’ is sung in Heaven! We might as well get used to singing it here in preparation.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

Some think that it will be boring praising God for all eternity, but if these verses are anything to go on, we will never be bored, instead we will want to continue rejoicing in God and all that He has done for us. Praise should always be upon the lips of the servants of God.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The song of praise is repeated. The hearts of the worshippers anticipate the beginning of Christ's rule on the earth. They look to Him who sits on the Throne and sing, "The Lord God Almighty reigns". He, of course, reigns in Heaven, but now He reigns on the earth. He is the Almighty Lord of Heaven and earth! Not that He has not always been so, but now it is plain for all to see. This anticipates the Millennial Reign of Christ in Jerusalem as promised to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Here is the focus of all this praise, Christ's Kingdom is established on earth. His Kingdom begins with a celebration feast (often called 'The Marriage Supper of the Lamb'). It should be noticed that His Church is to be with Him at His side. The Bride of Christ is now ready to take her ultimate position, for this is what she is destined for (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-23).

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

It is often suggested that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place during the seven year Tribulation, but according to the chronology of these verses, it is actually at the beginning of, or just prior to Christ's Millennial reign. Daniel 12:11 appears to suggest

that there will be a forty-five day interval between the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium.

Daniel 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

The false church wanted the treasures of the world, but the true church is arrayed in the riches of Christ. The righteousness of the saints is really the imputed righteousness of Christ which was given to them at the moment of salvation (Romans 3:28; 5:1-2; Galatians 2:16).

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

He clothes His own with His righteousness. Some Bible translations make the verse say that the white robes are the “righteous deeds of the saints”, but this would make it a works gospel. Surely the believer’s works were judged and rewarded accordingly at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10)!

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Only those who are part of the Great Feast will enter Christ's Kingdom. This means that only those who are members of Christ's true Church, and true believers in the Old Testament and Tribulation era are counted worthy.

These accounts, no matter how astounding, even unbelievable to the mind, are absolute truth, therefore God can be trusted to bring them to pass.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Even John is caught up in this majestic praise as he watched this vision. He falls down to worship the angel who is speaking to him, but is forbidden to do so. The angels are ministering spirits and are sent by God to minister to His children on earth. Usually this is done in secret, but sometimes God permits certain of His children to see angels …"Some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2) … "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

Unfortunately a 'worshipping of angels cult' has arisen in the church over the last few decades. So many are focusing on angels rather than on Him who is their Lord. It should be noted that many of these so-called angelic appearances are really impersonating demons.

All prophecy ultimately finds its fulfilment in Jesus. The whole Bible has one major central theme, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ and His Sacrifice On Calvary's Cross. Everything in the Book points to Him, so leave Him out, and the Bible becomes just a set of religious guidelines.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Don't focus on angels, don't even focus on the beauty of the Church, instead look to Him who is Faithful and True. John sees King Jesus riding the white horse in Victory.

When He came the first time, He came as the Lamb to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

When He comes the second time it will be as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

1 Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Revelation 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

He will return just as He promised (Matthew 24:27-31).

Matthew 24:27-30 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of

man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Jesus is righteous in all His judgements. He is justified for destroying the Antichrist's kingdom. He is just when He wars against all who oppose Him. When He appears, all of His enemies will be instantly slain. The world that once asked who could stand against the Beast, will realise that there is someone who can (Revelation 13:4).

Revelation 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

The vision of Jesus is expressed in symbols, therefore it is obviously foolish to make these things literal. The flames of fire speak of Christ's impartial and righteous judgement. His gaze penetrates even the hardest and darkest of hearts … "His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (Daniel 10:6).

He is crowned with many crowns. The false christ wore the 'Triple Tiara', but the Lord Jesus Christ wears countless crowns of absolute sovereignty and dominion.

John sees a secret name written on Him who rode the white horse. It is no use trying to work this one out – we will have to wait until we meet Him! Throughout eternity He has the "name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Look at His clothing, it is bloodstained! The Lamb of God will reveal the reason for His victory throughout eternity. Evidence of His sacrificial death will always be on display. We will be constantly reminded that Christ died on Calvary's Cross to redeem us from death, and give us a home in glory, so that we can reign with Him who paid the price for our salvation. The Christian should always know that victory is in the Blood of Christ.

Some see this blood as being of the slain at the Battle of Armageddon, therefore representing His victory over Antichrist. In this case Revelation 14:20 and Isaiah 63:1-2 fit the scenario.

Revelation 14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Isaiah 63:1-2 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

He is titled 'The Word of God' here. No doubt John thought about what he wrote in John 1:1 … "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." There is the idea here that Jesus is God's last word regarding salvation … "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Who are these armies of Heaven? In the Old Testament we read of 'The hosts' and we understand them to be angelic in nature. But from this description in Revelation we must assume that they represent members of Christ's Church, those redeemed by His blood before the Rapture. This is not to reject the ideas that the "armies" include Old Testament saints (Jude :14).

Jude :14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.

And the martyrs from the Tribulation period (Revelation 7:13).

Revelation 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Other armies may be angelic beings, for Jesus spoke of coming with them too (Matthew 16:27; 25:31; see also 2 Thessalonians 1:7).

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

Notice that these armies "follow" Jesus, therefore, as Sovereign Lord, He does not need them to complete His mission, for He alone

has the weapon to defeat the Beast. Instead they will participate in His return and the formation of the Millennial Kingdom.

The word ‘clean’ speaks of cleansing. Their garments have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Whoever they are we know that the Lord will come to this earth with a great display of power and might. It will be His victory parade.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

John sees a two-edged sword in His mouth … “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12; see Isaiah 11:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Isaiah 11:4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

He will destroy all enemies by the power of the spoken word. He who spoke the universe into existence can just as well overcome the powers of darkness and sinful man. They will be trodden down like grapes in a wine vat.

He will strike them down at Armageddon as the forces of Antichrist are poised to attack Israel (Joel 3:2; Zechariah 12:2-3).

Joel 3:2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Zechariah 12:2-3 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

It is at this point Israel will realise who the true Messiah is. This will fulfil the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29, as the remnant will be saved (Romans 11:25-27; Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 23:37-39).

Joel 2:28-29 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Romans 11:25-26 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Matthew 23:37-39 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Their Deliverer has not forsaken them regardless of what the Replacement Theology crowd say (Romans 10:13-14).

Romans 10:13-14 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

From now on, during the 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ, the nations will be ruled according to the Word of God. Finally God's Word will be the rule and standard of morality and righteousness. It will be very interesting to read the Bible then, especially the Book of Revelation! All who oppose Him will be destroyed (we shall read of this in a later chapter). What we see here is total government according to God's standards rather than man's … "And the government shall be upon his shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6).

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

We read of another name. This name (title) is on His clothing and thigh. It declares Him to be 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. No matter what earthly national leaders there will be at this, time, Jesus is the supreme authority. Every man, woman and child will worship Him as both the Only King and Only Lord … "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11) … "That thou keep

this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:14-16).

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

What happens to the bodies of the armies of Antichrist who are destroyed at Christ's return? The vultures and other ravenous birds are called to feast upon them (Matthew 24:28; Luke 17:37).

Matthew 24:28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Luke 17:37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

This is a clean-up operation designed by God. This may take seven years, the same amount of time for the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

Some see the 'fowls' as symbolic of the fallen angels but this interpretation does not make sense and in fact raises more questions about the text. In Ezekiel 39:17-20 we find birds feasting on the remains of the army of Gog and Magog.

Ezekiel 39:17-20 And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink

blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.

There is no reason to believe anything but the simple, literal meaning.

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

The fowls will not care who they are eating. It matters not to them if it is a king or a pauper. Scripture reminds us that people reap what they sow, so it is interesting that just as the bodies of the two witnesses were left unburied (Revelation 11:9-10), so, too, will the fallen in this conflict.

Revelation 11:9-10 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

What happens to the Antichrist and the False Prophet at Christ's return? John sees the great armies of Antichrist gathering together to war against Jesus just as He appears in the sky. If the Antichrist has time to turn his army from attacking Israel to attacking Christ, we have to assume that Jesus' Second Coming also takes time. It

will take some time for everyone on earth to see Him (Matthew 24:30: Revelation 1:7).

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

This whole event will be broadcast live on TV and the Internet.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

The battle, though, will be quick. Almost instantly the Antichrist and the False Prophet are captured by King Jesus. They are both cast alive into the Lake of Fire. There is no standing before the Throne for judgement for these two. Their wickedness and opposition towards Christ is self-evident. They had tricked and deceived people into accepting the Beast and his mark, and they had gathered the vast army in the vain attempt to dethrone Christ. They will be the first to go into the Lake of Fire (the ultimate Hell) before the Millennium, that is, before any man or angel will be cast there a thousand years later. We shall read more about this in Revelation 20.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

It is at this point that the armies of the Beast meet their instant doom. They will go before the Throne to be judged. They will be

consigned to Hell awaiting their final destination – the Lake of Fire. While their bodies are being devoured by ravenous birds, their spirits will be in the torment of Hades.

The sword Christ uses is the same one that spoke the universe into being – the Word of God. He will simply speak and so it will be. The Battle of Armageddon has been in preparation for six thousand years, but will last only a moment!

Revelation 20

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ can establish His millennial rule upon this earth, the Devil (Satan) must be restrained. An angel appears with the keys to the Abyss, the Bottomless Pit. He is holding a strong chain with which Satan will be bound. The Bottomless Pit is where all fallen angels are imprisoned while awaiting their final place of punishment (Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4).

Luke 8:31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Satan is given various diabolical names in this text. Revelation depicts him as “the Dragon”, but the reference to the “Old Serpent” reminds us of who it was that deceived Adam and Eve in Eden. Throughout the intervening years, he has been the accuser and adversary of all who believe.

Satan is captured (seized) by the angel and bound for a thousand years in the Bottomless Pit. This is obviously the same thousand years that Jesus Christ reigns on this present earth. This acts as a quarantine rather than a complete and eternal imprisonment. Because of it the earth will be free from his deceptive influences for one thousand years. It is during this time that righteousness will flourish, there will be worldwide peace, and the Earth will be returned to its Paradise condition (see Isaiah 11:3-5; 2:4; 35:1-2).

Isaiah 11:3-5 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 35:1-2 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Now that Satan is imprisoned in the Abyss, he cannot deceive anyone. He is totally without influence or power on the earth. Not only is he put in the Bottomless Pit, but he is bound with a strong chain. The Pit is then sealed and locked by the angel.

The vision offers us a brief look at what will happen after the Millennium is over. Satan is released for a short time and allowed to go and tempt the world to give up following Christ. We must remember that the Earth will be populated by mortal men and women during the thousand years, and as time goes on, no doubt many will take for granted the many blessings they enjoy. Do they

really have faith in God? If Adam and Eve believed the Serpent, it should not surprise us that humans in the Millennium will listen to him too. He will likely appear to them as an angel of light. The outcome of this is dealt with in Revelation 20:11-15.

We see in this verse that the Millennium is not the same as the New Heaven and New Earth. Failure to recognise this has fatal consequences. If they were the same then we would have Satan being released into the New Earth after his thousand-year captivity.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

John's vision now reveals the vast multitude of redeemed people standing before "thrones". We are not told who are on the thrones, and though there are several ideas banded about by commentators, we must just accept that those who sit on them are worthy to do so.

Those before the thrones are made up of all who lived for Christ, refusing to be controlled by the Antichrist's system, even to the death. Some commentators see these as being limited to the 'tribulation saints', but surely if Babylon is guilty of all the slain of the earth, then these must include the redeemed of all ages. It is better to see this multitude as being made up of all believers from every dispensation (Revelation 5:10; 20:6; 22:5).

Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The unbelievers will not be resurrected, reunited with their bodies, until after the Millennium is over. They will stand before the Great White Throne for final sentence to the Lake of Fire.

The First Resurrection is a reference to verse 4. The First Resurrection is actually made up of several resurrections, but we see the gathering of these in a single place. The Church is raptured before the Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The Two Witnesses are resurrected at the end of the first 3½ years (Revelation 11:11).

Revelation 11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

There is obviously a resurrection of the believers who die during the Wrath of God period (see Daniel 12:2).

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

We should see this First Resurrection as being the first time they are all together. The words “This is the first resurrection” refers to verses 4 and 6, for if it were about the judgement of the unbelievers of verse 5, then verse 6 would be problematic to say the least. The first sentence of verse 5 is therefore parenthetical.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Those who are saved of all ages, and are part of this assembled crowd, will never experience the second death. The second death is for unbelievers of all generations, and they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:8).

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The saved are rewarded with the great privilege of priests of God and Christ as well as reigning with Him throughout His earthly rule.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

Then Satan is released for a short period after the Millennium, but why does not God just keep him in the Abyss for eternity? Regardless of the fact that man is in a perfect environment, as were Adam and Eve, his heart is still open to suggestions and influences of evil. God will allow Satan to test man one last time.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Satan immediately is back to his old ways (1 Peter 5:8).

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

The devil never changes his desire to dethrone Christ. He goes out to deceive the nations, including Gog and Magog (Russia and her allies?). He assembles another great army to fight against Christ. During the obvious peace and prosperity of the Millennial rule of Christ, have the nations learned anything? How easily and quickly man is tempted and deceived by Satan. Rebellion against God is easily ignited by the devil (Jeremiah 17:9).

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

The fact that the nations can be deceived means that life will continue as normal during the Millennium, and that some still do not submit totally to Christ. We must once again remind ourselves that mortal man will live through the Millennium Age; there will be births and death; people will live, work and travel in much the same way as they do today.

Gog and Magog refers to the army raised from the regions of Russia, Iran, Turkey and other countries. It seems that this coalition further influences others from around the world to form a

great army to attack Jesus in Jerusalem. It is also possible that "Gog and Magog" does not mean any particular country or countries, but is simply symbolic of the great rebellion against God at the end of the Millennium period.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Satan assembles his army outside of Jerusalem, the city of the saints. This is obviously where Jesus is reigning and ruling the earth from (Isaiah 2:1-5; 9:6).

Isaiah 2:1-5 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

So both Jesus and all who inhabit Jerusalem will be attacked by Satan and his host.

This final attempt to dethrone God is in reality a suicide mission. In an instant this army is consumed with fire from Heaven (Hebrews 10:27; 12:29).

Hebrews 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

No man can rebel against God and win. Rebels are always the losers.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Once again the Devil is seized. He is cast into the Lake of Fire with the fallen angels and demons to be with the Antichrist and False Prophet. There he will be tormented for eternity (Matthew 25:41).

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

He will never be released from there. At last mankind is free from Satan. It has taken seven thousand years of world history and an unknown amount of pre-history time, but finally he is gone forever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Now John sees the end of time, the end of the earth, and the end of all wickedness. He sees the Great White Throne of Judgement. Who is seated on this Throne? John 5:22, 27 informs us that it must be Jesus, yet Revelation 20:12 says it is God.

John 5:22,27 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: [27] And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

How can some say Jesus is not God?

It is at this time our present universe is destroyed by God and replaced with a brand new one (2 Peter 3:10-13).

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

God does this to purge the universe of death. Our present earth contains evidence of over 6,000 years of death.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

These souls do not have their names in the Book of Life: they are doomed, but they still must be judged according to their deeds (Romans 3:10,20).

Revelation 3:10,20 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. [20] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The Book of Life only contains the names of the redeemed from all generations (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27; Luke 10:20).

Philippians 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Revelation 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Luke 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

This is actually the Second Resurrection. The life story of each person is opened. Every word, action and thought is declared. They will receive degrees of punishment.

In this courtroom we find the Judge and the Condemned. There is no jury or defence counsel. There is a sentence but no appeal against conviction. Nobody will be able to defend himself or raise an objection. There will be much “weeping and gnashing of teeth” and “anguish” though (Matthew 13:41-42; Romans 2:9).

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

All bodies of the unrighteousness dead are to be resurrected and reunited with their souls. It does not matter how they died or where they were buried, God has the blueprint for each person, and He will reconstruct them. Those who are in Hell will be there, too, for this final judgement. Everyone receives a just judgement.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the final imprisonment of all fallen angels, demonic spirits and human rebels. Certainly all who have ever rebelled against God meet their end in this place. It is the Second Death – the final and complete separation from God (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Jude : 13).

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Jude :13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Notice that “death” itself is cast into the Lake of Fire. Death is the product of sin, and being the enemy of life, it must be destroyed too (1 Corinthians 15:26).

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Everyone whose names are not in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, the place of eternal punishment for the Devil and his angels … "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). This is why we must urge people to sign up with the Lord Jesus before its too late. There is no second chance, just a second death!

Revelation 21

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

The Bible begins with the creation of Paradise Earth and ends with a recreated one. Since Adam this Earth has been under the curse for disobedience towards God, so before the New Heaven and Earth come, the Lord has to dissolve this present Universe. It seems that everything in the Universe has been stained by Satan and the fallen angels, so maybe the words "the prince of the power of the air" have more to them than first realised (Ephesians 2:2).

After the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ this present earth and universe will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-13, Isaiah 34:4, Isaiah 51:6; Psalm 102:25-26; Matthew 24:35).

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Psalm 102:25-26 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

This will make way for the creation of a new earth and universe. The original earth took six days to create, but the new earth will be created in an instant. This means that everything will be created just as it was in the beginning. Because of this we know that there will be no more sickness, pain and death, no more storms, floods or natural disasters.

It seems that the earth will be a single land mass as it was in the beginning. “No more sea” may mean that there will be no oceans (though there will be lakes and rivers), or that the water will be in a single location rather than having several oceans and seas. This new creation will be eternal (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22).

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isaiah 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

There is to be a New Jerusalem on the New Earth. This city will represent God’s presence on earth just as it did when the first earthly temple was built. We shall learn more about the New Jerusalem later. It should be noted that this city is not designed or constructed on earth, but literally comes down from Heaven. It is not Heaven itself as some suggest, for it comes “out of Heaven”. Is this the place Jesus spoke of in John 14:1-3?

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Jesus said He was going to “prepare a place” for us, and this text says it is “prepared”, so we cannot miss the intended meaning. This is the City all true believers are looking for (Hebrews 11:10; Galatians 4:26).

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

John speaks of it as a bride adorned for her husband. This has led some to believe that this city is symbolic of the Church. This should not be read into the text or else we will have to reinterpret Revelation according to a historical setting. This is the mistake that the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches have fallen into.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Here we have the true meaning of the New Jerusalem. It is the dwelling place of God on earth. God built the first earth so that He could have fellowship with man. This is exactly what is going to happen in the future new earth – a Heaven on earth! No other so-called gods will come to mind, not even a mention of them, so Allah, Krishna, and Buddha will be totally unknown. The whole earth will serve one God. His presence will never leave His people.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,

neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Everything of the old earth will be forgotten. This verse reveals that life will be perfect on the new earth. Sin and suffering will be unknown. Never again will even one tear of sadness be shed (Revelation 7:17, Isaiah 25:8, Isaiah 65:19; 1 Corinthians 15:54).

Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Isaiah 65:19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

1 Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Simply put, we will have nothing to be sad or cry about.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Nothing of the old earth will remain or else the new will be built upon death. This means that there will be no fossil or archaeological records to be found. God is always true to His Word, so if everything is going to be new, rather than renewed or renovated as some suggest, then it is going to be. There will be a

restoration of the conditions that existed before the Fall (Acts 3:21), but this will be on the New Earth instead.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Revelation declares God to be the Creator of both the old earth and the new; only fools disbelieve this.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He is the Sovereign Lord, the eternal God. In God's purposes this is already done and He is sure to bring it to completion. He knows the end from the beginning. The clock has been set, the hours are ticking away, and the time will come when all this will be completed just as He promised.

All who trust and believe in Him and His Word will have eternal life without price. Those who are thirsty enough are invited to eternal fellowship with God (Revelation 7:17; Isaiah 55:1-2; John 4:13-14; 7:37-38).

Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Isaiah 55:1-2 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of

the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 7:37-38 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

This, since it is part of Divine Grace, is a free gift made available to all who will believe.

The “Fountain of the Water of Life” is both spiritual, as indicated above, and literal as seen in Revelation 22:2,17.

Revelation 22:2,17 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [17] And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Those who receive Christ as Lord and Saviour must overcome the old earth if they are to be citizens of the new (1 John 5:4-5).

1 John 5:4-5 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

We must live as the sons of God in this present evil world (Philippians 2:15).

Philippians 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Those who refuse to bow to this world will inherit the new earth and all the blessings God has promised (1 Peter 1:4-5; Romans 8:17; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Hebrews 1:2).

1 Peter 1:4-5 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

While we await this event, faith must be upheld and used in standing firm.

Note that the overcomers mentioned are a reminder of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The outcome for those who do not overcome, but compromise with the world, is very different. The list in this verse is very complete. Not only are these evils in the world but also in the church today. These are the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20).

Galatians 5:19-20 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these ; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies.

Are many churches free from such things? Those who practice these evils, regardless if they claim to be Christians, are doomed to the Lake of Fire unless they repent. The point is; it is our choice. Will we be citizens of Heaven or of the Lake of Fire?

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

An angel calls John to view the New Jerusalem, the capital city of the new earth. The city is described as being the bride of Christ. This has led some to interpret the New Jerusalem as being symbolic of the Church. The actual city is being described here, and every city has its inhabitants. Both the location and the people are called the city. If we were to say, "The whole town went to the football game", we surely don't believe that the buildings moved from their places. If we keep this in context with the rest of the text, with Revelation 3:12, the explanation is simple … "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

The bride (wife) of Christ is the citizenship of the New Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 15:35-53; John 14:1-3).

1 Corinthians 15:35-53 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Every city reflects the glory and honour of its people. The people make the city glorious.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

John is carried to a high mountain (place) to view the New Jerusalem descending from Heaven. He was given a great vantage point so that he could describe as fully as possible what he saw in his vision. He viewed the walls, gates, foundations, street, river, tree and much more.

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

As mentioned above, the city reflects the glory of its inhabitants, and since we know that New Jerusalem will be God's dwelling place, it reflects His glory most of all. John expresses what he saw in human language, but it is impossible to fully describe the glories and wonders of the Heavenly City.

The whole city radiated with brilliant light. The colour of the light was green like a jasper stone yet crystal clear (transparent).

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

The walls are great and high. We will come to the measurements of the city in verse 16. Within the walls are set twelve gates. Each gate has the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel upon it. At each gate an angel stands guard. This should be taken literally or else what would the symbolism mean? It is far too detailed to be any kind of typology. If it describes the church then we need to figure out what it means in the light of Scripture. John said it describes the literal New Jerusalem!

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

The city stands four square. Each wall (east, north, south and west) has three gates. Truly New Jerusalem will be the centre of the New Earth. The nations of the earth will come from all directions to pay homage to the King of Heaven and Earth.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The city wall has twelve foundation stones laid in it. There may be three on each side of the wall. The stones are engraved with the names of the twelve apostles of Christ (Ephesians 2:20).

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

John is handed a measuring stick to measure the city, its gates and its walls. This means that the city has shape and size, therefore cannot be symbolic.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

The city is square and is as wide as it is long and high. This is an enormous city, but its measurements should be taken literally. It is approximately 1,400 miles long, wide and high. This means in total 2,225,000 square miles or 3,375,000,000 cubit miles (figures are approximates). The height is probably the measurement of its tallest building.

There is some debate about whether the city is cube shaped or shaped like a pyramid. It is of significance that the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple was a perfect cube, therefore the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, may be a cube, too (1 Kings 6:20).

1 Kings 6:20 And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.

Some commentators suggest that the Heavenly City will descend in cube form, and will be unfolded into the shape of the Cross of Christ.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

The walls are approximately 144 cubits or 266 feet high. Many commentators see this as referring to the thickness of the walls, but it can just as well indicate their height. It is not common for walls to be as high as the city they surround, therefore the "wall" (singular) is likely to be the perimeter wall rather than the actual walls of the City itself. Note the distinction in the next verse.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

The wall (singular) is made of jasper stone. The wall will sparkle with the reflected glory of God. The city, different to the outer wall, itself is constructed from pure, crystal clear gold. The

buildings will be dazzling gold which again speaks of God's glory. It is impossible for man to purify gold so that it is clear as glass, but God can and will.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald.

Now John describes the twelve foundation stones more fully. It is impossible for us to add a particular name to each of the stones, but John does say what precious stone they are constructed from.

1st Stone: Jasper – a green rock-like crystal.

2nd Stone: Sapphire – a sky-blue stone with specks of gold.

3rd Stone: Chalcedony – luminous green like a peacock's tail.

4th Stone: Emerald – the greenest of all gemstones.

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

5th Stone: Sardonyx – this stone has various colours within it, white, red, and brown.

6th Stone: Sardius: a blood-red stone.

7th Stone: Chrysolite – a dazzling green stone.

8th Stone: Beryl – Sea-blue / green stone.

9th Stone: Topaz – a transparent, greenish-gold stone.

10th Stone: Chrysoprasus – an apple green stone.

11th Stone: Jacinth – a violet, bluish-purple stone.

12th Stone: Amethyst – a violet, bluish-purple stone, but more dazzling than the jacinth.

Did you ever wonder why the devil has the new age crowd running around after crystals? He's trying to counterfeit God's New Jerusalem.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

The gates of the city are made from gigantic pearls. One pearl for each gate. If you think they're huge, what about the oyster they came from! The street of the New Jerusalem is pure, crystal-clear gold. This is the place where the Lord Jesus Christ promised to build you a mansion (John 14:1-6)!

John 14:1-6 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The city will require no building for a temple. God the Father and Jesus are its temple. Notice that temple is singular. Do you still doubt the Trinity? The place of worship will be at the feet of God Almighty. No one will be without the presence of God. This also

means that there will be no need of ceremonies, rituals or other human forms of worship. Then it will certainly be true … "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). This means that the believer's fellowship with God will be without any limitation of nature.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

There will be no sun, moon or stars illuminating the New Jerusalem. Instead, God's glory will be its sole source of light. Who is the Light? The Lamb is, for Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5; 8:12; Colossians 1:12).

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

The prophet Isaiah says that the Light will be the "LORD" – Jehovah (Isaiah 60:19).

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

Once aligned these two passages can only mean one thing. The glorious light of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ is the sole power source of the City.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

All the saved will walk in the light radiating from Christ. This also means that the city, as the earth's capital, will influence all the other cities on earth at that time. They will be governed in the knowledge, righteousness and purity of God. The leaders of other nations, and their peoples, will honour and worship the King of kings and Lord of lords. Who are the kings of these nations? Revelation 5:10 may be of great significance to us … "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." The whole earth will have access to God.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

The twelve gates remain open forever. It will constantly be daytime. There will never be any night. This again speaks of unbroken access to God. Since there is no night, does that mean there will be no sleeping? How can we say? But we do know we will rest in the Lord forever. City gates were always shut at night for fear of invasion, but since there cannot exist any external threats, there is no reason for them to be shut.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

It is reiterated again that the glory of nations will be brought into the New Jerusalem to God. Jesus Christ will be the King over all the earth … "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Only true believers have part of the citizenship of the New Jerusalem. No evil, compromising, ecumenical, or perverted person will ever enter in. If your name is not in the Lamb's Book of life on this side of eternity, you will not enter into His New Jerusalem on the other side.

Revelation 22

1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

God has provided everything we could possibly need in eternity. The citizens of the New Jerusalem (and New Earth) will have a fresh supply of pure water. This is a literal river rather than symbolic. So many Christians think Heaven will be like some dreamy never-never land, instead, it is a real place. So, too, will everything described concerning the New Earth be real. This River of Life flows from the Throne of God and the Lamb.

Notice that Throne is in the singular. We will have a constant reminder that "God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

On either side of this river stands the Tree of Life. It seems that the river runs through the tree. It is apt that the River of Life waters the Tree of Life. This is the same tree of life that God planted in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9).

Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden.

Because of sin, man was not permitted to eat of it. God wanted man to eat the tree of eternal life, but for six thousand years no one has eaten its fruit – instead, all die because of sin. On the New Earth, where there is no sin, eternal life will be enjoyed by all. This tree has twelve different fruits. It never has an autumn, therefore it flourishes all year round forever.

Healing of the nations refers to eternal health. This simply means that there is no possibility of anyone ever getting ill. The food (leaves) from this tree keeps people healthy. Sickness, as we understand, is a product of sin and death. Since there will be no more pain, it follows that there can be no more sickness. The leaves are preventative medicine of a sort … "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezekiel 47:12).

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

On this present earth man is cursed with sickness, ageing, deterioration and death, because of Adam's sin. But there will be no curse on the New Earth. The ground will be free from the curse (Genesis 3:17).

Genesis 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

Man lost the presence of God because of the curse. In the New Earth the Throne (presence) of God and the Messiah will be with man.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Everyone will enjoy constant access to God. Imagine that one day we shall see Him! "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they

shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Do you know why the Devil and Antichrist want to number everyone? They want to stop God writing His name in man's forehead. You see, Satan really only counterfeits God. In the New Earth all of God's children bear His name. We will always belong to Him.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

No night, why? Because there is no sun or moon. There will never be any need for manmade artificial light. Why have the copy if you can have the real thing! Genesis chapter 1 tells us that in the beginning God created light. This light emanated from Him, since the sun was not created until the fourth day. This is eternal light. Just think, no electricity bills, ever!

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

As we reach the end of our study on the Book of Revelation, we are presented with eleven stirring facts. These facts hold true, not only for the Revelation, but also for the whole Bible. We should have come to realise that its message is not history past but history future; and that we may very well be the generation that will see all these things unfold.

Fact 1:

The Message is Faithful and True because it comes from the one who is Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11).

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

This fact is both a comfort and an encouragement to all who believe. It is not a fairy tale, nor is it a book of mystic symbolism. It is a reliable and trustworthy account of what is going to happen on this earth before, during, and after Christ's Millennial Reign. It is faithful and true because it agrees with the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Fact 2:

The Message is a blessing because we know Jesus is coming soon. The promise which opened the Book of Revelation is repeated at the close of it (Revelation 1:3).

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The return of Christ isn't according to our perspective of time, instead, it is inline with God's predetermined timing. The "day is at hand" and the "judge standeth at the door" (James 5:9; Romans 13:12), indeed "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7). To us the Lord seems to be taking His time, especially since two thousand years have passed. There really is no delay, just an opportunity for more souls to be saved. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Many refuse to read, study and listen to the message of Revelation, therefore they can never receive the special blessing available for those who do. What is this blessing? It is fivefold …

[1] A deeper awareness of the presence of the Lord.

[2] Being prepared and ready for the Lord's soon return.

[3] The ability to stand in the final days.

[4] An anticipation of Heaven's glories.

[5] A true thankfulness for salvation.

In fact, the blessings are endless to those who really take time to study this wonderful book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

Fact 3:

The Message stirs up worship. John saw and heard all of these things. As he comes to the end of his prophetic visions, he has a desire to worship and praise. This should be our experience too. No wonder Satan does not want us to study this book.

This is the second time John bows before the angel bringing the message (Revelation 19:10).

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

He is about to receive a similar rebuke. We can understand why John was so awestruck with what he saw, but the worship of angels is a no-go-area for believers (Daniel 10:8).

Daniel 10:8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

True Christians worship none but God. We do not pray to or worship angels, or for that matter, men and women who have reached Heaven (Exodus 20:3-6).

Exodus 20:3-6 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

We worship God alone, not Satan or the millions of false gods. The worshipping of angels is explicitly prohibited in Colossians 2:18.

Colossians 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

Those who worship any other than the true God, reject the fact that Jesus died for their sins, refuse to live for Christ, reject the Scriptures, and reject any idea of Christ's return.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Fact 4:

The Message is to be studied by all. The book of Revelation is not for prophecy preachers alone, but all of God's people can at

the very least read it. All of God's people should know about the Last Days and the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The message should never be sealed up or removed from the Bible. No doubt some future new translation of the Bible will have the Book of Revelation removed from its pages (as did the early Catholic version). How can we be prepared for what is coming upon this earth if we do not bother to read and study this book? Daniel was told to seal up his prophecies because they were for another time in the future (Daniel 8:26; 12:4-10).

Daniel 8:26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

Daniel 12:4-10 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

But since we are in the end times, Revelation must be made plain through the preaching and teaching of it's message.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

The time will come when it will be too late to read and study Revelation. It will then be too late to prepare for the Lord's return. All that will be left is a lost eternity. Those who reject Revelation will also fail to enter God's Kingdom. Everyone will meet God in the condition they die in, or are found in, when He returns. We can either be unjust and filthy or righteous and holy. The choice is ours. Notice, though, it is in context with understanding and studying the final book of the Bible. The decision we make will determine where we spend eternity.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Fact 5:

The Message concerns itself with the imminency of Christ's Return and Coming Judgement. We do not know, from our position on this side of the Rapture, when Christ will come, but we can be prepared and ready (Titus 2:13-14).

Titus 2:13-14 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The Lord declares, "Behold, I come quickly." The idea is of the need for preparation in the hearts and lives of God's own. In turn, this message should be preached to the lost.

When He returns, judgement must follow (Revelation 20:11-15).

Revelation 20:11-15 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small

and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This judgement is based upon everything each person has done. God rewards His own with life eternal, but the lost are doomed to eternal damnation. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27).

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

The Lord Jesus Christ will sit as the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12).

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isaiah 48:12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.

He knows all that there is to know about every person on earth. Nothing can be hidden from His eyes.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Fact 6:

The Message informs us about who will be accepted by the Lord. How do we know we will enter Heaven's glory? Once saved, always saved theology, without true and ongoing commitment to Christ, does not fit the teaching of Scripture. Only those who obey the Lord throughout their lives are the blessed ones, and this is proof that they love Him (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-4).

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

1 John 2:3-4 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Only they have the right to enjoy the blessedness of the redeemed. What kind of Christian is it that refuses to live for Christ, but relies upon some sinner's prayer uttered decades ago?

Those who have had their sins washed away through the Blood of the Lamb sacrificed on Calvary's Cross, are permitted to eat of the Tree of Life and enter into the Heavenly City (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Fact 7:

The Message informs us about who are rejected by the Lord. These include homosexuals (dogs, see Deuteronomy 23:17-18 below), occultists (all who practice the dark arts, spiritism, astrology, and other forms of witchcraft whether white or black), those involved in perverted practices, murderers, idol worshippers, and all deceivers. The word "dog" highlights the flagrant rejection and perversion of God's moral laws.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God.

None of these can enter Christ's Kingdom unless they repent of these wicked things. They are lost,u and are rejected by God, and destined to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Fact 8:

This is the first time that the "churches" are mention since Revelation 3:22.

Revelation 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

This is because the church is not on earth during the intervening chapters relating to the Tribulation period,

The Message is a Proclamation of Christ as the only Messiah and King (2 Samuel 7:12-14; Matthew 22:41-46).

2 Samuel 7:12-14 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall

proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.

Matthew 22:41-46 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

The Revelation is Christ's message to His Church and to the world. It is not to be seen as a series of visions concerning last day events only. More importantly it is the revelation of Jesus Christ Himself. It declares what He says and who He is. So many miss this point when studying the book. No wonder they cannot understand its message. The church must proclaim Him to be the Messiah and Coming King, just as Revelation describes Him to be.

He is the "Star" prophesied about in Numbers 24:17.

Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

His coming would illuminate mankind (John 1:5-9).

John 1:5-9 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that

Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19). Since Satan's sin and fall, he has masqueraded as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14; and Isaiah 14:12).

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

He will be cast into the Lake of Fire where he will not deceive anyone again.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Fact 9:

The Message offers the Greatest Invitation. The offer of eternal life must be the most important invitation anyone could receive. This message is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit, but so few in our churches preach this good news today. We must unite with God's Holy Spirit in inviting the lost to come to Christ. Only He can quench their thirst and supply all their need. This free gift is not received where it is not preached.

I can do no better than quote from Charles Spurgeon on this verse. The text is taken from June 13, Morning and Evening. "Jesus says, "take freely." He wants no payment or preparation. He seeks no recommendation from our virtuous emotions. If you have no good feelings, if you be but willing, you are invited; therefore come! You have no belief and no repentance,-come to Him, and He will give them to you. Come just as you are, and take "Freely," without money and without price. He gives Himself

to needy ones. The drinking fountains at the corners of our streets are valuable institutions; and we can hardly imagine any one so foolish as to feel for his purse, when he stands before one of them, and to cry, “I cannot drink because I have not five pounds in my pocket.” However poor the man is, there is the fountain, and just as he is he may drink of it. Thirsty passengers, as they go by, whether they are dressed in fustian or in broadcloth, do not look for any warrant for drinking; its being there is their warrant for taking its water freely. The liberality of some good friends has put the refreshing crystal there and we take it, and ask no questions. Perhaps the only persons who need go thirsty through the street where there is a drinking fountain, are the fine ladies and gentlemen who are in their carriages. They are very thirsty, but cannot think of being so vulgar as to get out to drink. It would demean them, they think, to drink at a common drinking fountain: so they ride by with parched lips. Oh, how many there are who are rich in their own good works and cannot therefore come to Christ! “I will not be saved,” they say, “in the same way as the harlot or the swearer.” What! go to heaven in the same way as a chimney sweep. Is there no pathway to glory but the path which led the thief there? I will not be saved that way. Such proud boasters must remain without the living water; but, “WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.”

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

Fact 10:

The Message must not be tampered with. This important book should never be twisted to fit human ideas about God. This solemn warning is very emphatic. We must not add to it or take away from it. It is a very serious sin against God to change His Word (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6).

Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Proverbs 30:6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Those who add to it will suffer the plagues mentioned in the book. That is, they will be lost and doomed to eternal torment. That's how highly God places His Word.

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Those who take away from it are equally doomed. Many take away from its message by making it historical or mystical. The Reformed and Roman Churches have a habit of doing this dirty deed. Also, some pastors play down the importance of Revelation, or rarely mention it.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Fact 11:

The Message closes with a wonderful assurance. This assurance is threefold:

[1] What we have read is the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Christians, we should be confident that Revelation is absolutely true because Jesus said so. When the Lord speaks we should

listen and pay attention. The words are not from the imaginations of men, but from the heart of God.

[2] The Lord is coming soon. This is the root of the word *Maranatha*, which was a form of greeting in the first century church. This should delight our hearts enough to say, “Come soon, Lord!” (see 2 Timothy 4:8).

2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

A believer with the assurance and awareness of His coming is an overcomer. All we need to do, while we await His return, is to “occupy” ourselves in the knowledge and preaching of His Word (Luke 19:13; 1 John 2:28).

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

[3] The grace of God is upon all who accept these words as being faithful and true (Revelation 1:3; 3:14).

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Revelation 3:14 These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

Whoever calls upon His name receives the blessed gift of salvation (Romans 10:13).

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

True followers of Christ are assured of God's richest blessings in their lives and throughout eternity. Amen! So be it – it is true – you'd better believe it!

Old Testament References in the Book of Revelation

By: Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Th.M., Ph.D.
Founder and Director of Ariel Ministries

There are over five hundred references to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation. The following is a list of such references, but it makes no claim to being exhaustive or complete.

Some of these references back to the Old Testament do speak of the very same thing as the Revelation. However, in others, the Revelation merely borrows a phrase or motif for the purpose of developing a new area. This distinction should be kept in mind in the study of those Old Testament references.

Revelation	1:1	Daniel 2:28-29
	1:4	Isaiah 11:2
	1:5	Genesis 49:11; Psalm 89:27
	1:6	Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6
	1:7	Daniel 7:13; Zechariah 12:10-14
	1:8	Isaiah 41:4
	1:12	Exodus 25:37; 37:23
	1:13	Daniel 7:13; 10:5, 16
	1:14	Daniel 7:9; 10:6
	1:15	Ezekiel 1:7, 24; 43:2; Daniel 10:6
	1:16	Judges 5:31; Isaiah 49:2
	1:17	Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Daniel 8:17-18;10:9, 10, 12, 15, 19
	1:18	Job 3:17; Hosea 13:14
Revelation	2:4	Jeremiah 2:2
	2:7	Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Proverbs 11:30; 13:12; Ezekiel 31:8 (LXX)
	2:12	Isaiah 49:2
	2:14	Numbers 25:1-3
	2:17	Exodus 16:33-34; Isaiah 62:2; 65:15
	2:18	Daniel 10:6
	2:20	I Kings 16:31-32; II Kings 9:7, 22
	2:23	Psalm 7:9; 26:2; 28:4; Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10
	2:27	Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 30:14; Jeremiah 19:11
Revelation	3:4	Ecclesiastes 9:8
	3:5	Exodus 32:32-33
	3:7	Isaiah 22:22
	3:9	Isaiah 43:4; 49:23; 60:14
	3:12	Isaiah 62:2; Ezekiel 48:35
	3:14	Genesis 49:3; Deuteronomy 21:17
	3:18	Isaiah 55:1
	3:19	Proverbs 3:12

Revelation	4:1	Ezekiel 1:1
	4:2	Isaiah 6:1; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Daniel 7:9
	4:3	Ezekiel 1:26, 28; 10:1
	4:5	Exodus 19:16; 25:37; Isaiah 11:2; Ezekiel 1:13
	4:6	Ezekiel 1:5, 18, 22, 26; 10:1, 12
	4:7	Ezekiel 1:10, 10:14
	4:8	Isaiah 6:2-3; Ezekiel 1:18; 10:12
	4:9	Deuteronomy 32:40; Daniel 4:34; 6:26; 12:7
	4:11	Genesis 1:1
Revelation	5:1	Ezekiel 2:9-10; Daniel 12:4
	5:5	Genesis 49:9-10; Isaiah 11:1, 10
	5:6	Isaiah 11:2; Zechariah 3:8-9; 4:10
	5:8	Psalm 111:2
	5:9	Psalm 40:3; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10; Daniel 5:19
	5:10	Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6
	5:11	Daniel 7:10
Revelation	6:2	Zechariah 1:8; 6:3
	6:4	Zechariah 1:8; 6:2
	6:5	Zechariah 6:2
	6:8	Jeremiah 15:2-3; 24:10; 29:17; Ezekiel 14:21; Hosea 13:14; Zechariah 6:3
	6:12	Isaiah 50:3; Joel 2:10
	6:13	Isaiah 34:4
	6:14	Isaiah 34:4; Nahum 1:5
	6:15	Psalm 48:4-6; Isaiah 2:10-12, 19
	6:16	Hosea 10:8
	6:17	Psalm 76:7; Jeremiah 30:7; Nahum 1:6; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Malachi 3:2
Revelation	7:1	Isaiah 11:2; Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 7:2; 37:9; Daniel 7:2; Zechariah 6:5
	7:3	Ezekiel 9:4-6
	7:4	Genesis 49:1-28
	7:9	Leviticus 23:40
	7:10	Psalm 3:8
	7:14	Genesis 49:11
	7:15	Leviticus 26:11
	7:16	Psalm 121:5-6; Isaiah 49:10
	7:17	Psalm 23:1-2; Ezekiel 34:23
Revelation	8:3	Psalm 141:2
	8:4	Psalm 141:2
	8:5	Ezekiel 10:2
	8:5-6	Exodus 19:16
	8:7	Exodus 9:23-24; Psalm 18:13; Isaiah 28:2
	8:8	Exodus 7:17-19
	8:10	Isaiah 14:12
	8:11	Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15
	8:12	Isaiah 13:10

Revelation	9:1	Isaiah 14:12-14
	9:2	Genesis 19:28; Exodus 19:8
	9:3	Exodus 10:12-15
	9:4	Ezekiel 9:4
	9:6	Job 3:21
	9:8	Joel 1:6
	9:9	Joel 2:5
	9:11	Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 15:11
	9:14	Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7; Joshua 1:4
Revelation	10:1	Ezekiel 1:26-28
	10:4	Daniel 8:26; 12:4-9
	10:5	Deuteronomy 32:40; Daniel 12:7
	10:6	Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 32:40; Nehemiah 9:6; Daniel 12:17
	10:7	Amos 3:7
	10:9	Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:8-33
	10:11	Ezekiel 37:4, 9
Revelation	11:1	Ezekiel 40:3-4; Zechariah 2:1-2
	11:2	Ezekiel 40:17-20
	11:4	Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14
	11:5	Numbers 16:35; II Kings 1:10-12
	11:6	Exodus 7:19-25; I Kings 17:1
	11:7	Exodus 7:3, 7, 8, 21
	11:8	Isaiah 1:9-10; 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:49; Ezekiel 23:3, 8, 19, 27
	11:9	Psalm 79:2-3
	11:11	Ezekiel 37:9-10
	11:15	Exodus 15:18; Daniel 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 27
	11:18	Psalm 2:1-3; 46:6; 115:13
Revelation	12:1	Genesis 37:9-11
	12:2	Isaiah 26:17; 66:7; Micah 4:9-10
	12:3	Isaiah 27:1; Daniel 7:7, 20, 24
	12:4	Daniel 8:10
	12:5	Psalm 2:8-9; Isaiah 66:7
	12:7	Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1
	12:9	Genesis 3:1; Job 1:6; 2:1; Zechariah 3:1
	12:10	Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Zechariah 3:1
Revelation	12:14	Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 40:31: Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Hosea 2:14-15
	12:15	Hosea 15:10
	12:17	Genesis 3:15
Revelation	13:1	Daniel 7:3, 7, 8
	13:2	Daniel 7:4-6, 8
	13:3	Daniel 7:8
	13:4	Daniel 8:24

13:5 Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36
13:7 Daniel 7:21
13:8 Daniel 12:1
13:10 Jeremiah 15:2; 43:11
13:11 Daniel 8:3
13:13 I Kings 1:9-12

Revelation 14:1 Psalm 2:6; Ezekiel 9:4
14:2 Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2
14:3 Psalm 144:9
14:7 Exodus 20:11
14:8 Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:7-8
14:10 Genesis 19:24; Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17
14:11 Isaiah 34:10; 66:24
14:14 Daniel 7:13
14:18 Joel 3:13
14:19 Isaiah 63:1-6
14:20 Joel 3:13

Revelation 15:1 Leviticus 26:21
15:3 Exodus 15:1-18; Deut. 31:30-32:44; Psalm 92:5; Psalm 111:2; 139:14
15:4 Psalm 86:9; Isaiah 66:23; Jeremiah 10:7
15:5 Exodus 38:21
15:6 Leviticus 26:21
15:7 Jeremiah 25:15
15:8 Exod. 40:34-35; Lev. 26:21; I Kings 8:10-11; II Chron. 5:13-14; Isaiah 6:1-4

Revelation 16:1 Psalm 79:6; Jeremiah 10:25; Ezekiel 22:31
16:2 Exodus 9:9-11; Deuteronomy 28:35
16:3 Exodus 7:17-25
16:4 Exodus 7:17-21; Psalm 78:44
16:5 Psalm 145:17
16:6 Isaiah 49:26
16:7 Psalm 19:9; 145:17
16:10 Exodus 10:21-23
16:12 Isaiah 11:15-16; 41:2, 25; 46:11; Jeremiah 51:36
16:13 Exodus 8:6
16:14 I Kings 22:21-23
16:16 Judges 5:19; II Kings 23:29-30; II Chronicles 35:22; Zechariah 12:11
16:19 Jeremiah 25:15
16:21 Exodus 9:18-25

Revelation 17:1 Jeremiah 51:13; Nahum 3:4
17:2 Isaiah 23:17
17:3 Daniel 7:7
17:4 Jeremiah 51:7; Ezekiel 28:13
17:8 Exodus 32:32-33; Daniel 12:1
17:12 Daniel 7:24-25
17:16 Leviticus 21:9

Revelation 18:1 Ezekiel 43:2
18:2 Isaiah 21:9; 34:13-15; Jeremiah 50:30; 51:37
18:3 Jeremiah 51:7
18:4 Isaiah 52:11; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6, 45
18:5 Jeremiah 41:9
18:6 Psalm 137:8; Jeremiah 50:15, 29
18:7 Isaiah 47:7-8; Zephaniah 2:15
18:8 Isaiah 47:9; Jeremiah 50:31-32
18:9-19 Ezekiel 26:16-18; 27:26-31
18:9 Jeremiah 50:46
18:10 Isaiah 13:1
18:12 Ezekiel 27:12-25
18:20 Jeremiah 51:48
18:21 Jeremiah 51:63-64
18:22 Isaiah 24:8; Jeremiah 25:10; Ezekiel 26:13
18:23 Jeremiah 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Nahum 3:4

Revelation 19:2 Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 119:137; Jeremiah 51:48
19:3 Isaiah 34:9-10; Jeremiah 51:48
19:5 Psalm 22:23; 134:1; 135:1
19:6 Psalm 93:1; 97:1; Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2; Daniel 10:6
19:11 Psalm 18:10; 45:3-4; Isaiah 11:4-5; Ezekiel 1:1
19:13 Isaiah 63:3
19:15 Psalm 2:8-9; Isaiah 11:4; 63:3-6
19:16 Deuteronomy 10:17
19:17 Isaiah 34:6-7; Ezekiel 39:17
19:18 Isaiah 34:6-7; Ezekiel 39:18
19:19 Psalm 2:2; Joel 3:9-11
19:20 Isaiah 30:33: Daniel 7:11
19:21 Ezekiel 39:19-20

Revelation 20:2 Genesis 3:1, 13-14; Isaiah 24:21-22
20:4 Daniel 7:9, 22, 27; 12:2
20:5 Isaiah 26:14
20:6 Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 26:19
20:8 Ezekiel 38:2; 39:1, 6
20:9 Deuteronomy 23:14; II Kings 1:9-12; Ezekiel 38:22; 39:6
20:11 Daniel 2:35
20:12 Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 62:12; 69:28; Daniel 7:10
20:15 Exodus 32:32-33; Daniel 12:1

Revelation 21:1 Isaiah 65:17; 66:22
21:3 Leviticus 26:11-12; Ezekiel 37:27
21:4 Isaiah 25:8; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19
21:9 Leviticus 26:21
21:10 Ezekiel 40:2
21:11 Isaiah 60:1-2; Ezekiel 43:2
21:12-13 Ezekiel 48:31-34

21:15 Ezekiel 40:3, 5
21:19-20 Exodus 28:17-20; Isaiah 54:11-12
21:23 Isaiah 60:19-20
21:24 Isaiah 60:3-5, 16
21:25 Isaiah 60:11; Zechariah 14:7
21:26 Isaiah 60:5, 16
21:27 Isaiah 52:1; Ezekiel 44:9; Zechariah 14:21

Revelation 22:1 Psalm 46:4; Ezekiel 47:1; Zechariah 14:8
22:2 Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Ezekiel 47:12
22:3 Genesis 3:17-19; Zechariah 14:11
22:4 Psalm 17:15; Ezekiel 9:4
22:5 Isaiah 60:19; Daniel 7:18, 22, 27; Zechariah 14:7
22:10 Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9
22:11 Ezekiel 3:27; Daniel 12:10
22:12 Psalm 62:12; Isaiah 40:10; 62:11
22:13 Isaiah 44:6
22:14 Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Proverbs 11:30
22:15 Deuteronomy 23:18
22:18-19 Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32
22:19 Deuteronomy 29:19-20